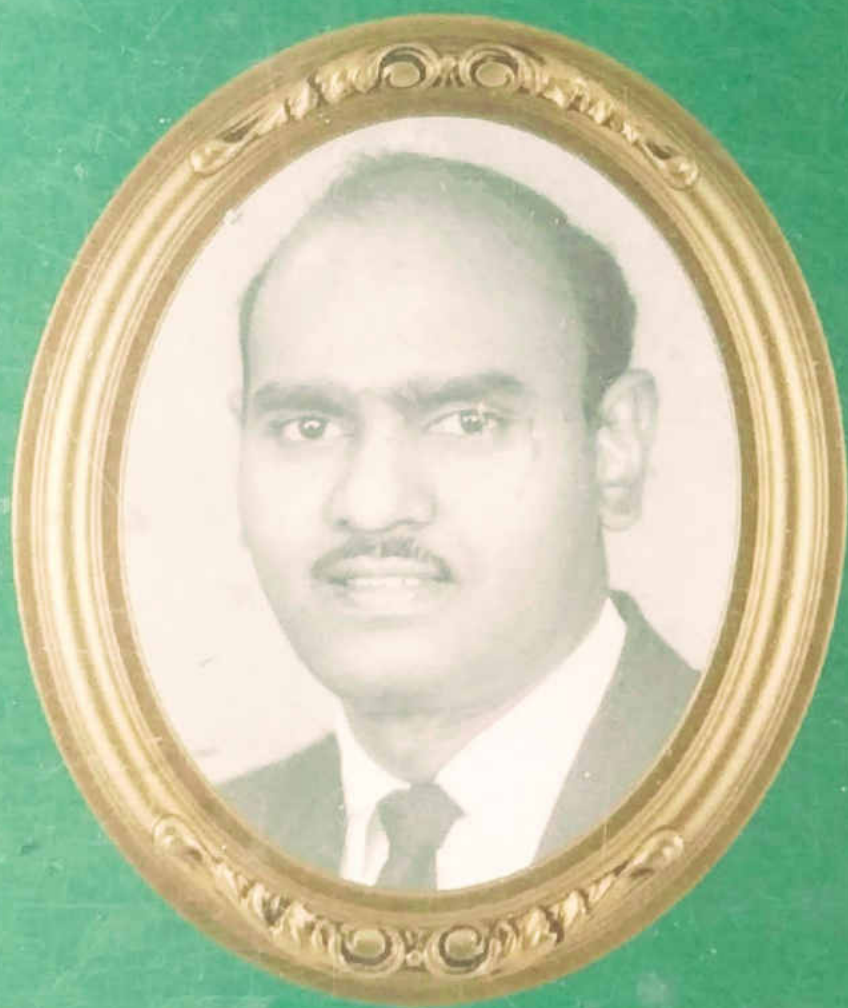


Classic
COLLECTIONS



60 Selected Articles of
Rev. Dr. Theodore Williams

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Classic
COLLECTIONS

60 Selected Articles of
Rev. Dr. Theodore Williams

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Foreword

The Indian Evangelical Mission is committed to the church and its ministries to edify the people of God through God's Word and empower them through various workshops and seminars to engage in the Mission of God. One of our focuses and objectives is "to challenge Indian Christians to realize their responsibility for world evangelization and to recognize their partnership with other Christians in the world in fulfilling their task." We thank God for our Indian churches that stood with IEM for the past fifty years in planting the churches where there is no church but in partnership with the churches.

We thank God for our church leaders, Christian families and all partners. IEM could bring Mission awareness to the churches through the Scripture rather than through telling stories and statistics. We strongly believe that when someone is involving himself in any work by the decision rooted in God's Word it is permanent. When it is depending upon the stories and situation the emotional decision will not continue for a long time.

We thank God for using Rev. Dr. Theodore Williams the founder and the first General Secretary of IEM to stand in different platforms to share the passion of God through God's Word and enabling him to put his reflections in the manuscript according to the needs. As we celebrated the Golden Jubilee (1965 - 2015) we have decided to bring the articles of Rev. Dr. Theodore Williams where they did not appear in the regular magazines for more circulation and there are a few messages which are rich in content and which were in the audio format and were transcribed to make them available for the Body of Christ.

I am thankful that the publication team of IEM is able to work towards this task and make it available to bring awareness on Missions as well as to work with appropriate action plans to fulfill the mandate of God. May the Lord enable the readers to fulfill the missionary call for every individual who is created in the image of God and transformed by the blood of Christ.

Rev. Dr. Raja Singh Elias
General Secretary

Preface

It is my joy, honour and a privilege to write a preface for this book "Classic Collections" the articles written by the Founder President of the Indian Evangelical Mission, Rev. Dr. Theodore Williams. This book is a compilation of all the articles which Rev. Williams has either spoken or written on Missions over a period of time at different occasions. This book reveals the heart and plan of God for the lost souls. Rev. Williams challenges individuals, families and churches to get involved in reaching the lost. From the Biblical basis to the Church at large the vision for missions is deeply portrayed.

Today the great commission is greatly ignored by the churches. Hence this book gives varied thoughts from personal testimony to the role of churches today in taking the Gospel to the unreached in fulfilling the great commission.

I would like to express my deep appreciation to my dear brother Rev. Dr. Raja Singh Elias who has progressively arranged these articles in order to give a clear thought process to the readers. I also acknowledge the work of Ms. Sultana Butt in the Church Ministries Department who could work on the manuscript. I am sure it will edify, instruct and challenge everyone.

May your heart beat for missions for His glory.

With all spiritual Blessings

Yours in His mission

Jenny Christopher

Head of Church Ministries

I. Missions and Rev Dr Theodore Williams

1. A Personal Testimony

-Taken from Outreach July 1983

God orders the circumstances of our life even before we acknowledge Christ as our personal Saviour and Lord. A strictly religious and moral upbringing is in itself not sufficient for our salvation. But God uses it for building into us discipline and principles. This is the way it was with me.

I was trained to read my Bible every morning and go to church on Sundays. To make sure that I had gone to church my father who was a strict disciplinarian used to make me repeat the sermon text. Of course, it was easy at times to find the sermon text even without sitting in church. I also had to memorize the collect for the Sunday to earn my Sunday lunch!

With all this conformity to Anglican religion, I still had no answers to the turbulence that was going on in my heart during my adolescent life. I had no victory over sin and no answer to the temptations that I faced at that time. My religion taught me what sin was but did not show me how I could overcome it.

I heard the message of new birth for the first time during a series of revival meetings in 1953 at Emmanuel Methodist Church. This truth became a compelling influence early in 1954 due to continuous Gospel meetings under the Christ for Madras Crusade. I knew I must be converted but did not know how. A period of spiritual struggle ensued for six months.

1. Miracle of New Birth

At the end of that, one day in my room I came to an end of myself. I knew I could not change myself by a series of resolutions. That is not conversion. I put myself into the hands of my Lord confessing my

sinfulness and utter helplessness and asked Him to forgive me and take charge of my life. It was April 28, 1954. That was the miracle of new birth that took place in my life. Coming from a lower middle class family which depended solely on my father's salary as a middle school teacher, there were many times when we did not have even the bare necessities. I was trained to live without things. Until I graduated from university I did not have the luxury of studying in the light of an electric lamp. We used a kerosene lamp because the small house in which we lived was not electrified. So when I grew up, I wanted to make up for all that I missed.

II. Youthful Ambitions

My ambition was to come to the top in some profession and earn much money. In those days it was said that in the field of Statistics there was great scope for coming up. There were only ten seats in the whole University of Madras for this course. A student had to score above a total of 650 marks in the Intermediate class to get admission into the Statistics honours class. For a first class only 450 marks were needed! Now, this became my goal in life. I worked hard and succeeded. Even then it was not easy to get into Statistics. I remember the many times when my father and I had to go and meet this one and that one before I could get that coveted seat!

But now, there was a complete turn around in my goals. It was in my final year in the Statistics honours course that I was converted. During that year I became involved in the Sunday school in my church. By that time I had made Emmanuel Methodist Church my spiritual home. I was also involved in the Evangelical Union of Students which was just started in Madras. I found that I had more interest in teaching and preaching the Word of God than in Statistics. I began to realize that the Lord was calling me into full time Christian service.

III. Answering God's Call

At that time a booklet on "How to find the Will of God" came into my hands. It was the testimony of a chemical engineer whom the

Lord called to the ministry of the Word. I did what he did, noting down the objections to my coming out into full time Christian work and asking the Lord to answer them. He did answer them one by one. So I knew that I must step out. The Lord led me to South India Bible Institute (SIBI), Bangarapet, for two years' training. Some of my friends could not understand why I went there. They wanted me to join the BD course in a recognized seminary. But the Lord clearly led me to go there. It was there I was introduced to the Spirit-filled life and the challenge of missions. As my parents were upset with the step that I took, I had no one to support me in SIBI. The Institute gave me free tuition and board. For the rest of the expenses, I had to trust the Lord. Those were wonderful years.

The Lord dealt with me in two areas in my life. One was the attitude to money. After two years at SIBI, I was invited to teach there. My monthly salary was Rs. 90. After deducting the tithe, I sent Rs. 50 to my parents, paid Rs. 25 for my board and was left with Rs. 6 for other expenses! It was then that the Lord told me that money should never be a consideration in my service to Him.

Secondly, the Lord clearly told me that I should not go abroad for any further training. I am not saying that it is wrong to do so but that is the way the Lord led me. The Lord gave me the verse, "Them that honour me, I will honour" (1 Samuel 2:30b) as my life text.

When I was at SIBI, I made a journey to Jawadhi hills as a student. It was in 1959 and just three years after the National Missionary Society had started work there. We stayed with an old couple who were NMS missionaries and visited the village for nearly a week. That experience left a lasting impression on me. I made four more journeys, one to the Sitteri hills in Tamil Nadu, another to the jungles of Madhya Pradesh, a third to Sikkim and other Himalayan regions and the fourth to the tribal areas of Orissa. As a result, I dedicated my life fully to the cause of reaching the unreached.

The Lord did not call me to be a missionary though I was willing.

But instead, I was involved in the founding of the Friends Missionary Prayer Band along with Mr. Samuel. Prayer groups consisting of young people who were converted in the Vacation Bible Schools in Tamilnadu functioned under the name VBS Friends Fellowship and were later constituted into the Friends Missionary Prayer Band in 1959. I served as the President of FMPB until 1962 and started the magazine Araicuval and was its editor until 1962.

In 1964 the Lord gave me the opportunity to become the Missionary Secretary of the Union of Evangelical Students of India. Still my heart was not satisfied. I was longing for the formation of an India-wide, evangelical missionary movement. This longing was fulfilled on Jan.15, 1965, in the annual conference of the Evangelical Fellowship of India at Devlali when the Indian Evangelical Mission came into being. I never thought I could go to that conference because I was fighting one of my constant physical problems, a bronchial infection. But the Lord gave me enough grace and strength and took me there. Now, I know why He did. Since then, I have been involved in the IEM.

IV. Marriage & Enrichment

It was at SIBI that I met Esther Faulkner who became my wife in 1971. It was the Lord who brought us together. The enrichment and blessing she has brought into my life is evident from the fact that it was after 1971 that the Lord brought me into greater opportunities and increasing responsibilities. It was Esther who stood with me in those early years when the Lord gave me the vision of the IEM. She has played a very important and yet invisible role in the growth of the IEM. Until 1976 she took the major share in editing "IEM Outreach."

Realizing my unworthiness and the marvelous grace of God granted to me, I pray that I will never outlive my love for my Lord and my usefulness to Him.

2. Sharing the Vision Past, Present and Future

In 1954, God's Spirit was moving in the Indian churches through the Vacation Bible School movement which began in South India Bible Institute. God drew me into that movement from my student days in Madras. Through that movement I came to know about SIBI, and thus came into full time Christian work.

I. Early Movement

God moved marvelously and people were converted in many of the cities and towns of South India through the VBS Movement. There was another brother ... the pioneer and founder... who I respect greatly, Mr. P. Samuel. He was used greatly and together we were very involved in this movement. We formed small prayer groups for those who came to the Lord, in Tuticorin, Nagercoil, Madurai and other places, mostly in Tamil Nadu. Then we felt that these should be linked together. So we called them the VBS Friends' Fellowship. We met twice a year for spiritual retreats. Then we felt it was not enough to be meeting for our own spiritual renewal and encouragement.

II. Launching Two Missions

I was teaching at SIBI where I heard about people who had never heard the Gospel. The Lord led me to visit Javadi Hills where the NMS started work. Other trips to Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Sikkim greatly moved and challenged me. I knew something must be done, and asked the Lord what He wanted me to do. So in December 1959, in one of the VBS Friends' Fellowship retreats in Kovilpatti, this missionary burden was shared. The entire group fasted and prayed the whole day. Afterwards, Mr. P. Samuel and I, with two other leaders formed The Friends' Missionary Prayer Band. He was the Vice-President. I started the Tamil magazine "Araikuval" or "Challenge". Then in 1963 my heart was not satisfied because the Friends' Missionary Prayer Band, as it was then, was not moving and taking action. At that time I got into the EFI executive committee. In 1964,

the Chairman was an expatriate missionary, a well-known leader of an International Mission today. He felt EFI should not start a Mission. The whole matter was dropped. Then in 1965 this was brought up again. I expressed my concern that we should start a Mission because there were many young people who wanted to go as missionaries. There were no channels at that time besides the Indian Missionary Society and the National Missionary Society. I thought the Friends' Missionary Prayer Band could be revived and linked with them so we could function together. So in 1965 with an Indian chairman, Dr. Thirumalai, it was decided that the Indian Executive Committee members should do what the Lord wanted them to do. That was how the IEM was launched. But things did not happen as I expected. The FMPB and the IEM began to develop as separate Missions and I was called into giving my full time to IEM. I have no regret that the FMPB began to grow separately. Praise God there are two large indigenous Missions today in India!

At that time, God was also dealing with me in my personal life. I had some personal disappointments; some plans failed, and God was taking me through a lesson on the operation of the cross in the life of a Christian and a servant of God. That was a precious lesson to which I cling even now. "Except a corn of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone, but if it dies, it brings forth much fruit." Around the same time I was also reading Jonathan Edwards' book "By My Spirit" of the great happenings in China. I was deeply moved and God gave me the text "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit." These two lessons had been deeply embedded in my heart, just as I was being ushered into the Indian Evangelical Mission. And friends, it is from this we have had the beginning; the place of the cross, and complete dependence on the Holy Spirit.

III. Pillars of IEM

Our 25 years of history are in some ways rooted in this. That is why we chose Vision, Faith and Sacrifice as our pillars. The Holy Spirit gave us the structure, the growth, the leaders, the opportunities and the blessings we have now. These we will not give away for anything.

there is a place for the operation of the cross in the organization, in individual lives, and for our dependence on the Holy Spirit. From these precious lessons have come many corollaries. For instance, we firmly refused to be drawn away by current, fashionable, attractive missiological fads. We have said that we will not set up numerical mottos for ourselves. That does not mean we stand aside and criticize those who have numerical growth. We have not even been drawn by the theme 2000 AD, though we take note of it. We know that it does give a lot of impetus, motivation and drive to have a concrete year like that as our goal. But we have not brought this into any of our planning or mottos. We have not emphasized the number of churches, missionaries, converts and so on, but we do not despise those who have been led otherwise. God has led us in this way and we will stand true to that.

IV. A Motto for the Movement

On the other hand we do have a motto. It is this "A Church among every people group." We do accept what is of the Lord in current missiology. We have accepted the concept of 'People Group' though we have not accepted the homogenous principle indiscriminately. The Gospel must be brought to every person within that group, and this way the Kingdom of God is to be established on earth. This is our motto and we are committed to that.

V. One purpose, one vision

Speaking about the vision, what do I foresee even as I lay down the mantle and get off the stage? What do I see in the coming years for IEM? We are committed to this vision that, wherever there is an unreached people group, we will seek the Lord's will. "...Which of these groups do you want us to accept as our target? Where should we enter?" The unreached people groups in India and all over the world are our concern. But that does not mean we should do everything that needs to be done. We should do what God wants us to do. We should not do what others are doing, and because they are doing it. I pray that IEM would stand true to this. This means a complete dependence on Him to direct us and seek His will

corporately. And that is why our planning meetings are so important. We should not look at them merely in terms of financial expenditure and travel inconvenience, but as a time when we come together as a people banded together under God, with one purpose and with one vision. When the Holy Spirit moves us and leads us, our decisions are correct.

VI. Faith and Finances

There are two groups from whom I drew inspiration greatly in my earlier years of leadership in the IEM. One is the Bakht Singh movement here in India, and I pay tribute to Brother Bakht Singh! His emphasis was on corporate guidance, on seeking the Lord's will before taking any steps. That is something which we have learnt, but not completely implemented. We need to constantly work at asking the Lord what He would have us do as a group after corporately seeking guidance. The other thing that I learned from Brother Bakht Singh was depending on God for our financial supply. When we talk about faith and finances, there are various approaches. One is that we should never mention our needs but pray for them or we can inform our prayer groups and then the supply may come. We have gone a step further. We have notified our need through our magazine, but we will not make money the most important thing in our missionary effort. We were geared to this principle. We will minister to people spiritually, and then when they support us, we will receive it. We will not keep on talking about money or hand over pledge cards and press people to make a decision on the spot. Not that we criticize those who do. God leads them in one way. He has led us in another.

VII. God's Provision

I want to say this to the future leaders of the IEM. We should not stop accepting any challenge or entering any area of need because there is no money or personnel. Once you do that, you will shrivel up; you will stagnate. We do not want negative pessimism to creep into the Mission. We will enter areas where God wants us to enter, corporately seeking His will. When IEM was called upon to send a

missionary couple to Afghanistan in 1968, a single man to Thailand in 1971 and a family with young children to Papua New Guinea in 1976, it was really too much for us. We did not know where we would get their support, how all this would work out. But God had taken care of that. We did not enter Thailand, Afghanistan and PNG because we had money, or because we had worked out some neat financial arrangement, or even because we had dedicated personnel. We accepted the challenge, and then prayed for personnel. The partnership agreement with the Overseas Missionary Fellowship was made in 1965 when they celebrated their centenary, and we were just beginning! But it was in 1971 that it came to fruition. God provided the person Dr. Theodore Srinivasagam – and we sent him. So we do not enter into any area of human need, or accept any challenge apart from trusting God for the finance and personnel. Secondly, God has brought us in touch with many development agencies but we will not allow them to dictate to us regarding the direction we should move. We must decide under God what we should do.

VIII. No Dynasty

I have also learned much from the OMF. It has been my privilege to read their literature and read about Hudson Taylor, and to be in their conferences and Central Council, to see how they function and choose their General Director. All this has made a deep impact upon me. Again the same principles are followed and it is a God-honouring movement. Many missions have been started by individuals, but in time, they have floundered and got lost because it has remained an individual's movement. That is what we do not want in the IEM and that is why I am stepping off the stage. God has led deliberately that I should do this. It is not out of any sense of defeat, nor am I being driven away! I received letters wondering whether I was being driven away from the IEM by some politics, and I resolutely denied that! Thank God, He has saved us from that and He will continue to do so! Some asked whether I am handing over IEM to my son, Theodore Srinivasagam! That is also the 'in' thing today. Thank God He did not give me a dynasty. In stepping aside, I will not be like an old father-in-

law poking his nose into every little detail!

Hudson Taylor was the founder of OMF but the Mission goes on with numerous leaders. That is one thing I learned from the OMF. Another is their trust, their faith in God, their simplicity. They are not a movement taken out of modern missiological fads. They know from where they should take their direction.

IX. New Frontiers of Mission

So brothers and sisters, foundations we have, roots we have. Our roots need to go deeper; our foundations become firmer. When IEM was started, the main burden was the unreached. Those needs and frontiers are still there; we cannot escape them. But let us not close our eyes to new frontiers of missions. We should never become stagnant and preoccupied with what we are doing now. I pray that our leaders will not have their nose to the grindstone, preoccupied with details, problems and maintaining the status quo. We should see other challenges far beyond our own little department or field. The slums, the poor and the internationals of the city have not been attended to except in New Delhi. Very little evangelism is being done among the handicapped. It does not mean that we should immediately start institutions. In meeting human needs we should beware of becoming manipulative and losing individual concern and compassion. IEM looks forward to years of development work. We have a project officer, and experts in projects. A hostel with 150 children may be attractive and impressive to the supporting agencies and groups, but we need to check whether we are fulfilling what we are called to fulfill in terms of individual concern and personal investment in life. There are other institutions and rehabilitation programmes. Perhaps we can work with them, providing the cutting edge of evangelism in meeting this need. Other areas include drug addicts, prostitutes and women on our mission fields. We are doing very little for women. There are an appalling number of women in our villages who die at child birth, who are abused and oppressed. We also need to cater to Muslims.

X. Human Channels

As we think of these new frontiers in Missions, let us remember that we have to meet those needs with human channels, human instruments. We do not think of expansion at the expense of those who are to be used. As before, we will continue to be committed constantly to developing people; our own missionaries and workers, all of us together as the IEM family. We will develop and build up each other. We will not squeeze the last drop of blood from each one so that our programmes and projects get going, or become manipulative to achieve our goals. We will also consider developing outstanding leaders for our newly-planted churches in the mission fields. Thank God for the few, but are they sufficient? Are we going to devote ourselves in the coming years to develop leaders and strong spiritual churches? Not namby-pamby, wishy-washy churches constantly looking to us to pay their employees and workers, but strong churches which have caught the vision of Christ and which can move forward, because of that vision and their commitment to Christ.

Friends, I cannot say everything I have wanted to say, but should I? It is in your hands now and in the hands of the future leaders. You have new leaders and you will have your own input. We have a vision and we should never lose it. We have a commitment and we should never lose that.

3. A Miraculous Deliverance

Taken from Outreach April 1987

Dear Friends,

I. Here are the facts

I felt I must write to you personally after our accident on 23rd February, 1987. We have received letters, telegrams, get well cards and many expressions of your love and concern for us. Our hearts are overwhelmed. Thank you very much for your concern, prayer support and understanding. You have already received the details of the accident. After a very blessed and fruitful ministry at the Deeper Life Convention in Emmanuel Methodist Church, Madras, my wife, mother, Magdeline Carunia who was a part of our family helping us at home and ministering with us and Mr. Thangasamy, our IEM missionary were all traveling together. When we were near Kaveripakkam a private bus hit us. I do not know how it happened. Mr. Thangasamy who was with us says that the bus was trying to overtake another bus and came and hit us. It is a miracle that I am alive. Several who have seen the damaged car have expressed great surprise that I as the driver escaped death. It is nothing but the miraculous intervention of God that saved Esther and me. Esther was sitting on my left. At the impact of the collision the door opened and she was thrown out sustaining injuries on her arm and back. Maggie, the girl directly behind me, was hit in the head and became unconscious. My mother received a deep cut on the cheek and is still receiving medical treatment.

It took some time before a government bus stopped and agreed to take us to a hospital. We stopped in the government hospital at Walajahpet. Because of the doctors' strike they refused to attend to us. So we were taken to CMC Hospital, Vellore. It was a journey of one hour and fifteen minutes. Maggie was laid down at the back seat and my mother in another seat in the bus. Esther and I were sitting up. It caused us great physical pain as we sat in the back seat of the bus with much jolting. On arrival at the casualty department of the

CMC Hospital, Maggie was pronounced dead and medical attention was given to us.

From February 23 until February 28 Esther and I were in the hospital. We received excellent care from the doctors, nurses and other staff of CMC Hospital. Everyone was very good to us. Our chief doctor, Dr. C P Christian was especially good to us.

II. God's Loving Family

One of the things that came home to us during this time was the great host of people whom God has given to us in His work. Our own IEM leaders and staff rallied behind us. We cannot forget their sacrificial help at this time of our need. I must mention the help we have received from Mr. & Mrs. Isaac Jesudasan, both of whom spent all those days in Vellore (Mrs. Lily Jesudasan stayed in the ward with Esther and my mother taking care of them day and night), Mr. G. Sasikumar who stayed with me for four days, Dr. Theodore Srinivasagam, Mr. P. S. Thomas who did much of the driving and Mr. Victor Sittler who spent a day and a half at Vellore. The staff at Madras and Bangalore stood behind us lovingly. Dr. Paul Immanuel was the first one whom we contacted on arrival at CMC Hospital. He took the necessary steps immediately. His parents too helped us much. Mr. R. Stanley, President of Blessing Youth Mission and his staff were a great help to us. Mr. Stanley was with me during a greater part of the day on February 23 wheeling me around in the stretcher for X-rays, scanning and to the ward. We must also mention the concern and encouragement we received from Mr. C. Samuel of Voice of the Shepherd Ministries, Mr. & Mrs. John Abubakker of Fellowship for Neighbours India and Mr. D. John Benjamin of Jesus Calls.

Brothers and sisters of all organizations, denominations and churches came to our help encouraging us and expressing their concern and prayer support for us. Bishop and Mrs. Elia Peter of our Methodist Church and Bishop Chrysostom of Mar Thoma Church visited us in Vellore. This has made us realize how much of a debt we

owe to others in Christian love and concern. Personally I was greatly challenged to be a servant to others seeing the example of these men and women. My mother was discharged on March 4 and we all returned to our home on that same afternoon. God's abundant mercy has been extended to us in these days. I cannot understand why God had spared me in this serious accident. I do not feel anymore worthy or deserving than any other. I accept without any questioning God's sovereign control of these circumstances with the loss, pain and sorrow involved in this.

Esther is a source of great encouragement and support to me in these days though she too had received injuries and has gone through much pain and suffering. X-rays and the scan have shown that we have not had any fracture or serious internal injuries. But we do have a lot of aches and pains resulting from external injuries. My mother also needs continued medical attention.

III. Lessons Learnt

When we stand at the door of death, our values, priorities and goals in life are really reviewed and evaluated. I have come to realize the value of human relationships. The Lord has also been speaking to me about my own ministry. Perhaps I have packed my schedule too tightly to give time for God to make the necessary alterations.

4. Into the Sunset

Taken from Outreach December 2009

(For a true Christian, life on earth is a passing phase. It is a tempestuous journey, filled with victories and defeats, joys and sorrows, pain and pleasure and so on. With his eyes firmly fixed on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, the disciple of Christ understands that all things work together for the good of those who are called according to His purpose. Our Founder-General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Theodore Williams who is a missionary-statesman in his own right unveils his heart as he travels through the 3 stages of life – sunrise, noonday and sunset, reminding us of the fact that we are God's chosen people and our destination is our heavenly Home. May God minister to you through this inspiring article.)

Jesus said, "As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work" (John 9:4). He was talking about the sunset in each life. There are different stages of life we all go through if the Lord grants us life. Each stage has its ups and downs. Blessed is the person who has learned to accept, enjoy and use it for the Lord. This is the month of Thanksgiving and let us celebrate the stage of life in which we are, each one of us, boys and girls, young people, men and women and senior citizens who are walking into the sunset and let us express our Thanksgiving.

I. Sunrise Years

The Lord said, "For you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings, and you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall" (Malachi 4:2). In Luke 1:78 Zechariah prophesied, "The rising sun will come to us from heaven." The time of sunrise is a time of joy, hope and strength. This is the experience of childhood and youth. No clouds in the sky, many desires, plans and ambitions loom large over the horizon. Standing at the threshold of life, the sky seems to be the limit. If we do not allow sin to make inroads and take control and if we keep our desires and plans committed to the Lord, It is a road of victory and fulfillment. We can thank our Lord for His continued protection and guidance.

II. Noonday

Then there is the noonday experience. Our physical, intellectual and emotional powers are at their height. To achieve, climb high and reach out for the top rung of the ladder seems to be the passion and the drive. The danger is that we may become driven people and not a God-led or God-directed people. There can be emotional and spiritual accidents and catastrophes manifested in the family life and in the spiritual life. This too can be a time of Thanksgiving and Joy provided we have the Lord as the Captain of the ship and do not assume mastership of our own destinies.

III. Sunset Years

Finally there is the sunset. Some of us including myself are in this stage of life. We do not know how long it will be before the sun will set but we are moving into it. There is so much to give thanks to the Lord for. We can thank Him for life itself. He has saved us from serious illnesses and deadly accidents and brought us thus far. We can thank Him for the spiritual enrichment and the spiritual heights through which He has led us. For the privilege of being useful to Him and to others and for making our lives meaningful we can thank Him.

There are struggles and battles peculiar to the sunset period.

a) **There is the struggle against loneliness.** This is not just the absence of company or people around us. You may live in a crowded family with umpteen relatives around you, each one trying to help you and order you around. Or, you may have a lot of friends offering their counsel and advice. In the midst of all this, you may have a gnawing sense of loneliness, of being an orphan. Bereavement might have robbed you of the constant companionship of a spouse. You might have had your fights, arguments and cold war sessions but the fact that he or she was there was a source of strength. But now, you feel cruelly alone! It is at such times that we remember the words of our Lord, "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you" (John 14:18). He spoke of the coming of the Holy Spirit to be our companion forever. Is this not an occasion of Thanksgiving?

b) **There is the struggle against loss.** Sometime back I received

Dr. John Stott's personal newsletter. He is moving into the sunset with poise and dignity. One of the things he mentions is the list of things he misses which he has lost. In his prime time he traversed the length and breadth of this world preaching and teaching the Word of God and enjoying his hobby of bird watching. But now, he is confined to a wheel chair, so dependent on others. The risen Christ told Peter, "When you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go" (John 21:18). We have celebrated our independence and self-sufficiency. Now is the time to celebrate the fact that God is our strength and we can lean upon Him and also thank Him for those whom He has given in the family of God who are there for us. Is this not a matter of Thanksgiving?

There is also the time when we part with our possessions and past time which we cherished and held close to us. The house we built, the hobbies we cherished and the recreation which we enjoyed most, all of this we have to part with.

There are physical handicaps and ailments which prevent us from doing those things which we did earlier.

c) **There is the loss of opportunities and avenues of service.** But there are unexpected opportunities that come at sunset. So there is much material for thanksgiving.

Of course, the sunset is not the end. It leads to a glorious new day and heavenly glory. Hallelujah!

II. Missions and Biblical Foundations

5. What Christians believe

It is a Herculean task to sum up in one short article all the great tenets of the Christian faith. I will deal with the main core of the Christian faith. It is often said that all religions are the same. This is a superficial statement. If we study them in depth, the teachings of the various religions vary. Even in a basic concept such as that of God there are differences. What do the Christians believe about God?

First of all,

I. God reveals Himself. God is a Person. Personality does not mean that He has a physical body or shape. He is Spirit and yet He is a Person. Being a Person, He must express Himself and communicate with other beings. He is the Creator of the universe and all creatures. He has also created man. He created man in His own image. That is, man also has personality like God. Man has a moral and spiritual nature. Of all living creatures, man alone can think abstractly. A monkey cannot work out an algebra problem or think philosophically, but man can. Man alone can make his decisions on the basis of what is right and what is wrong. God has revealed Himself to man in nature. We look at the beauty and the order of nature and know that God is wise. We look at the towering mountains and the tall waves of the ocean and know that God is almighty. But nature does not speak of God's love for the individual. God has revealed Himself in the Bible. Holy men wrote these words as God inspired them and directed them. So if we want to know of God, we must read the Bible which is God's Word. But even this is not enough. God became man in order to show man what God is like. This is Jesus Christ. He is God become man. When we see Jesus we see God. If we know Jesus we know God. In Jesus God has become understandable, knowable and approachable.

Man cannot know God by his own wisdom or intellect. Man has tried to grope after God and has tried to reach Him in many ways. Finally, God broke through the veil and revealed Himself. In Jesus Christ God became knowable. One need not wait for ages to understand the intricacies of philosophy or engage in exercise of the mind in order to know God. Even a simple, illiterate village woman can know God when she hears about Christ and believes in Him. God can be known and approached by anyone.

II. God redeems.

God is the Saviour of all mankind. There is a barrier between man and God, the barrier of man's sin. Man is in rebellion against God. In his own nature, man is evil. On the other hand, God is holy, pure and righteous. Sinful man cannot approach God. He is helpless to save himself from his sin. In this dilemma, God took the initiative and came to man's rescue. Man needed a saviour to deliver him from the dilemma of his own sin and selfishness, and God became that saviour. The punishment for sin is God's judgment. If man is to be set free from sin, someone must bear the punishment of sin in his place. Who can do this? The life that is offered must be a sinless life. Only then it can bear the punishment for the sins of others. Also, it must be an infinite life to account for the sins of all men. It must be a timeless life to account for the sins of all men of all ages. Only God's life can meet these conditions. So God became man and gave Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of man. That is why Jesus Christ died on the cross. Right from the beginning, He began to foretell His death for the sins of mankind. Then, because He is God, He rose from the dead. He could not be held by death. Thus He has become the Saviour of all mankind. He offers forgiveness of sin and salvation to all those who believe in Him. In Christ God has become the Saviour of man.

Forgiveness of sin is not cheap. It is costly. Even in human relationships, forgiveness is costly. It costs the one who forgives. If God is the one who should forgive, then God must pay the price. This is what He did by giving his life for us. Man can experience this salvation not by his own good works or by doing anything but by

simply believing that Christ died on the cross for his sins and by surrendering his life to Him. It is by grace and not by man's merit. All those who have received this salvation are equal in God's sight. There are no barriers of caste or race or class. All of these belong to God's family by receiving his free salvation.

III. God restores.

God has acted in human history on the cross and provided salvation for man. Now, He is active in this world drawing men and women to accept this salvation. Jesus Christ will come again on a definite day in human history and then all sin will be removed. Perfect peace, justice and righteousness will be established. All those who have accepted God's salvation will live in their resurrected bodies in a perfect environment serving Him and loving Him.

Because Christians believe that God has taken the initiative in man's salvation and provided a way for him, they believe that Christ is the only way of salvation. This is not affirmed in arrogance or pride but in humble assurance. It is also asked why Christians, more than others, propagate their faith and seek to win converts. It is not with a view to increase their numbers. It is a part of the practice of the Christian faith to preach about Christ and makes others receive his salvation because Christ has commanded His followers to do this. It is also a result of the love and concern that Christians have for people which prompts them to tell others about Christ so that they too will find the satisfaction and the life which they have found. When a person is set free from his sin and self-centred life, he begins to love others and serve them and tell them about Christ. This is the basis of Christian service to mankind. Christians believe that it is not enough to follow the teachings of Christ or to emulate His example in service. In fact both these steps are impossible without the most important step of accepting Him as one's own Saviour and allowing Him to set one free from sin and selfishness.

6. Christ the Mediator

I. Evangelism and Forgiveness

Evangelism is basically the offer of forgiveness to man who is estranged from God. Human pride has always rebelled against the doctrine of forgiveness. George Bernard Shaw wrote, "Forgiveness is a beggar's refuge; we must pay our debts." However, this does not alter the fact that forgiveness of sin is one of the basic needs of man. In the Apostles' Creed we affirm, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins." St. Ambrose said in the fourth century, "I will not glory because I am righteous, but because I am redeemed; not because I am clear of sin, but because my sins are forgiven." How true it is! Ours is the religion of the forgiven.

II. Forgiveness and Atonement

On what ground does God forgive? There is a doctrine of cheap grace which says that there can be no other ground of forgiveness than the very nature of God which is love. The Hindu religion has a doctrine of grace which makes room for forgiveness of sins on this basis. To repeat with fervor the name of a particular deity, or to fulfill certain religious duties, is thus thought to bring divine favour and forgiveness.

But, according to the Bible, forgiveness is costly. Levitical sacrifices reveal that the process of reconciliation of a sinner is not easy. "Without the shedding of blood is no remission (of sin)" (Hebrews 9:22). The same idea is brought out in the New Testament which speaks of the price of redemption (1 Corinthians 6:20 and 1 Peter 1:18).

The New Testament teaching is that forgiveness cannot be taken for granted. It is free only as it is mediated to sinners through the death of Christ. God cannot forgive except in consistency with His whole character. He is just and at the same time He is also the justifier (Romans 3:26). To do justice to His character, He must forgive in such a way that sin is not treated lightly. The reality of His love, as well as the reality of the awfulness of sin in His sight, must be demonstrated. This was what necessitated the Cross.

Atonement Explained

- i. **The law of Karma** makes it difficult for the Hindus to accept the Christian doctrine of atonement. According to this irrevocable law, each man must bear the consequences of his own action and no one can interfere with the lot of another. There is assuredly no such thing as vicarious suffering. All suffering is traced ultimately to the sufferer's own evil deeds in this life or in the past life. Thus, an impersonal law of cause and effect is thought to be at work in the moral order of this universe.

But the Gospel declares that Christ has taken our Karma (i.e. the total effects and consequences of our sin) upon Himself and thereby broken its power and made us free from it. But it does not stop here. While admitting the presence of the law of retribution in the moral order, we relate its working to the personal activity of God. The atonement delivers not only from the effects and consequences of sin but also from divine wrath.

- ii. **The word propitiation** is used in the New Testament (Romans 3:25 and 1 John 2:2) to describe the work of Christ. Propitiation, in the biblical sense, is the turning away of divine wrath and not the mere expiation of sin. We cannot truly understand the forgiveness of sin in the Christian sense unless we accept the biblical concept of the wrath of God. The wrath of God is not the same as the capricious and vindictive anger of pagan deities. In the Old Testament, it is seen as "the stern reaction of the nature to evil in man." In the New Testament also, it is associated with the personal activity of God. It is not just an impersonal "inevitable process of cause and effect in a moral universe." "The wrath of God is the wrath of divine personality." The death of Christ removed this divine wrath for all who put their trust in Him.
- iii. **The idea of reconciliation** is also used to indicate the work of Christ on the Cross. Sin has caused a state of enmity between man and God. Christ's death removed this enmity and brought about reconciliation between God and man. Christ died instead of us as our Substitute, as well as on behalf of us as our Representative.

iv. **Justification** is another great word portraying the forensic aspect of the work of Christ. Substitution and justification are closely linked. The sinner is acquitted because Christ bore the penalty of his sin according to the law. This judicial explanation of the atonement is sometimes criticized as "immoral." This is not true because "from first to last this has been the work of God" (I Corinthians 5:18, NEB). He is the judge and it is His laws that are broken. He Himself has borne the penalty. He did not take our sins and lay them on another. So there is no breakdown of principles of justice here.

It is also said that the relation of the judge to the criminal in a court is not intimate enough to represent the relationship of God to the sinner who is forgiven. In reply, we must remember that God is not only the judge but also the substitute who identified Himself with us and bore the penalty of our sin.

III. Some Important Facts

Evangelistic preaching on the Cross often ignores some important facts. First, we are dealing throughout with the work of God. This does not mean that there is no divine reaction against sin which needs to be reconciled. Because it is all of God, it is objective to man. We must also note that it is the work of the Triune God. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit were all involved in the atonement. It is not right to separate them in this activity.

There is no other ground of forgiveness except on the basis of what God has done for us in Christ. In these days of religious relativism, we need to declare with certainty the words of James Denney. "If God forgives at all, it must be in this way and no other."

Though the atonement is universal in scope and in application, its efficacy is conditioned on its acceptance by faith. In his book *Upon the Earth*, Dr. D. T. Niles writes, "God made us. God loves us. Jesus died for us. Our trespasses are not counted... These affirmations are true of all men and for all men whether they know them or not, like them or not, accept them or not." This universalism is not in accordance with the teaching of the Bible. The Bible makes a clear

distinction between those who believe and those who do not believe.

In conclusion, it must be remembered that it is the Cross and not the crucifix which is the symbol of biblical Christianity. The Cross does not represent a Christ who died but a Christ who died and rose again. Forgiveness of sin is offered not through the crucified Savior, but through the living Savior who was crucified for our sins (Acts 10:39-43, 13:38). May we go forth in the power of the Holy Spirit offering the living Christ and his salvation to our generation.

7. Who is an Evangelical?

The word 'evangelical' is often misunderstood. There are some who confuse it with the word 'evangelistic'. Certainly evangelicals are evangelistic in their concern and their ministry. But to be evangelical is not the same as being evangelistic.

To be evangelical is to be committed to a certain doctrinal and theological position. I heard a denominational leader say in a meeting, "We do not want to divide ourselves as evangelicals and non-evangelicals. These distinctions are imported from the West." How wrong he was! There is nothing western or eastern about the evangelical position. It is biblical.

To be evangelical is to accept the Scriptures as the divinely inspired, infallible Word of God and submit to its authority for our faith and conduct. It is not enough to quote Scripture and use it. We must submit to its authority for our faith and conduct. This is what distinguishes an evangelical from those who may merely use Scripture to propagate their ideas.

Does this mean that an evangelical has not the freedom to explore new thought patterns for his beliefs, new categories for communicating what he believes and new strategies for missions? Certainly he must be sensitive to contemporary thoughts and philosophies and understand and relate his faith to contemporary challenges. He must also explore new categories of thought to communicate his faith effectively to his generation. He must be open to new strategies discovered through anthropological and sociological insights. But he must remember that he is committed to the Scripture which must judge his thought patterns, categories and strategies. We must accept this discipline and confine ourselves to this framework in our exploits in the field of missions and social concerns and in our explorations in the field of theology and missiology.

The word “**evangelical**” is often identified with obscurantism, narrowness and separatism. There are millions of Christians who would subscribe to evangelical theology and are in all major Christian denominations, some of them in leadership as Bishops, Archbishops, Moderators and Presidents.

To get back to the statement of that denominational leader, it is not right to gloss over the distinctive theological position for which the word “evangelical” stands. Certainly it is not right to cause strife and division in the Church on that basis. But it is equally wrong to ignore the validity of the historical biblical faith to which our forefathers were committed and which is relevant even today. We cannot be wishy-washy about what we believe. The apostle Paul was just as intensely committed to the doctrinal purity of the Church as he was to its moral and spiritual purity. (See II Corinthians 11:2-4; Ephesians 5:25-27). Our attitude to Genesis Chapters 1-11 and the doctrine of Creation, to the virgin birth, the miracles of Jesus, His bodily resurrection, and His second coming is important. We cannot gloss over these and just talk about evangelism and missions. What we believe about evangelism and mission and how we do them will depend on our beliefs about those scriptural events and other scriptural truths such as the sinful nature of man at birth, the need for individual new birth and the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts and lives of human beings.

8. Biblical Basis for Missions

Introduction

I firmly believe in "The biblical basis of missions." Our concern is for those who have not heard the Gospel. A concern for missions and our involvement in missions is not based on missionary stories, missionary statistics or on the lives of missionaries. These are important and they have their place. But we place our missionary concern on the Scripture; otherwise we may be emotionally moved. We may do something temporarily, maybe give some money or be willing to go to some corner of the earth and then forget all about it. That is why there are so many casualties in missions.

Our mind is involved in this because the Bible gives a very large place to the mind. Christian service has to do with the mind, so with the mind we comprehend God's will as viewed in the Bible. Then, our emotions get involved. We have compassion and love, all of which constrain us and lead to the commitment of the will. But to get the mind to be under conviction, to convince the mind and persuade the mind, we need the Scriptures. That is why we will look at some Scriptures and see why we believe in missions. Why should we be involved in missions?

I. The Trinity

I would like to do it with a carefully worked out outline so that you can remember it clearly. God is One but the Bible teaches very clearly that this is one God in whom we believe (not in 3 gods but one God). This Godhead has 3 persons. The word Trinity is not mentioned in the Bible but any Bible-believing Christian who accepts the total teaching of the Bible must believe in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, not as 3 names or titles, but as 3 distinct persons in the Godhead-The Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Triune God is involved in creation, in redemption and also in missions and you find it in Scripture.

II. The Triune God and Missions

God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are concerned about missions.

Throughout Scripture, God the Father is always God the Father, and the Son is always the Son and the Holy Spirit is always the Spirit. Throughout the Bible, we also find the missionary concern of God the Father in His promises and His purposes. We also see God's performance - God's activity manifested through the Son. We find that when God the Son declared His mission, His missionary purpose was revealed. During His ministry on earth, we find His missionary purpose. In these messages, you will discover His missionary purpose.

In the coming of the Holy Spirit and in the continuing activity of the Holy Spirit, we can discern God's missionary purpose. We see God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit involved in missions.

III. God the Father in missions

1. His Two-tier Promise

Let's take God the Father and His promise in the Scripture. I use the word "promise" because it is a very significant promise. In Genesis 12:2, 3 we read, "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you. I will make your name great and whoever curses you I will curse and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." God called this man Abraham and gave him the promise. In simple words, "I will bless you." What a wonderful promise to inherit. In Galatians 3, this promise is given to all of us so we cannot feel jealous of Abraham and say it was only for him. In Galatians 3:14 we read, "He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus so that by grace we might receive the promise of the Spirit."

By faith this promise given to Abraham is ours in Christ Jesus, that is, the promise that He will bless us. It is a 2-tier promise. One aspect of the 2-tier promise is this, "I will bless you." The other part of the promise in verse 3 is, "By you all the peoples of the earth will be blessed." Look at that word "peoples." What is that word in your own mother tongue? You will use different words. In some of our regional languages that word is "vansa,"

in some other languages it is “kuah,” but it is certainly not “kutum.” It is not the family, as father, son, daughter, mother, but it is certain families joined together- clans. That is what it means. That is how it is translated in that way in our regional languages.

The Bible uses several expressions like this. For instance, the word ‘peoples’ is used in plural. It is not a grammatical mistake. Deliberately the plural is used – “peoples.” Then you can find the word ‘nations’ used. The word ‘nations’ can be translated generally as Gentiles, but it is also a connotation of “ethnic” groups, people who can be defined ethnically. Then the word “languages” is used. These are some interpretations of clans, tribes, languages, peoples and ethnic groups. The word “peoples” probably refers to cultural groups. So how does God see the entire human race? He sees them as consisting of various colours, languages, cultures and ethnic backgrounds. That is the way God looks at the human race. It is true He sees us as individuals but He also sees us as bunches of people, groups of people and this is scriptural.

One may then ask whether the Bible supports racism and can we in the name of missions or in the name of any particular missiological principle encourage racism, separate racial status which can breed segregation? Or can the Bible be understood to support casteism so we form separate caste churches in the name of some missiological principle and encourage caste segregation? The answer is a firm and an authoritative no. The Bible is against divisions of all kinds. Caste is a sin. Casteism, racism, linguistic clichés and regionalism are sin. To divide men within the church and outside the church on any of these bases is sin.

2. Variety is of God

God has created men to speak different languages, to belong to various cultures and to belong to various ethnic groups. Why

did He do this? It was to create beauty and variety so that the entire human race forms a beautiful mosaic. What God intended to do by creating variety and beauty, sinful man has taken and erected barriers to separate man from man. So just because racism and casteism have come up, we should not forget that these varieties are there in the Scriptures, recognized by God and allowed by Him. Caste of course was not created by God, it was man-made, and it is sinful. But the other differences create beauty and variety.

3. God's promise to Abraham

Variety is God's will. God said to Abraham, "I will bless you and through you blessings will come to all these groups of people." You find this throughout the Scripture. This promise comes again and again, not only to Abraham but also to the people of God, to the descendants of Abraham. That is God's promise - He will bless His people, He will bless those whom He has chosen and He will make them a blessing to all groups of people. Do you believe that? You don't have to be a full time missionary, or preacher. You have believed in Christ and in Christ by faith you inherit this 2-tier promise which was given to Abraham.

What was this 2-tier promise? Through you blessing will come to all groups of people on this earth. How is God going to do it? In His great sovereign purpose and wisdom, He may take you to some of these places or He may, by your prayer and involvement, make you a blessing, though you may not move out of your own town or village. Your life will count in such a way that the whole world is blessed. As a believer, a child of God, this is your privilege, this is promised to you and if it is not fulfilled, something has gone wrong somewhere, maybe in your own life.

i. Abraham's Descendants

In Genesis 26:4, He also promises this to his descendants. "I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands and through your offspring all nations of the earth will be blessed." That was

to Isaac. The promise was repeated to Jacob. The promise did not depend on the worthiness of the person, even to a subtle, sly character like Jacob.

In Genesis 28:14 God said "Your descendants will be as the dust of the earth and you will spread out to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, all peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring." But if you look at the life of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, their entire lives were built around these promises. God's confidence and God's dealings with them had to do with this promise. This is true of us. God's dealings with us are all based on God's promise that we will be blessed and we will be a blessing to the nations. But we forget this and often hang on to things selfishly.

ii. **Missionary purpose in family and career**

If you pray for your marriage, or for your career or job, how do you put that prayer in the context of the missionary purpose of God? If you think of your family, your own future or your decisions or choices, how do you relate them in the context of this promise? This is given to a child of God and not just to those who are called to be missionaries. It is for everyone who is a child of God, and there is a responsibility with it.

iii. **Abraham and his descendants**

Now, Abraham's descendants went into Egypt. First, they went as immigrants, then they became slaves and God brought them out of Egypt to gather them at the foot of Mount Sinai. He constituted them to be His own people, the people of God. He entered into a covenant with them.

He says in Exodus 19:5, 6, "If you obey me fully and keep my covenant then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession." Now that is a promise- that is the blessing. "You will be my own, my treasured possession." Look at the declaration of His purpose. "Although the whole earth is mine you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy

nation." God said to them, 'You will be my kingdom and my priests.' These can be taken separately - A kingdom community and a community of priests and you will also be a separated nation. Here God says, "I'm making you my people so that you will stand in other nations as me. You will represent other nations to me and you will represent me to other nations. You will pray for other nations and intercede with me and will speak on my behalf to other nations." So the whole community will look at God's purpose corporately, not only to individuals but to the entire people of God. The calling is that they should be a kingdom, be priests, a separated community, a separated nation.

That is why we talk about the local church's involvement in missions. There is not only the individual involvement - there is a corporate involvement of the people of God in missions. God has declared His purpose here in Exodus 19.

4. In Various Stages in Israel

i. In History

Next, we look at God's purposes in the various stages of the life of the people of God. In 1 Kings 8, the building and dedication of the temple is a great milestone in the history of Israel and the history of the children of God. You know the temple became a stumbling block to them because they said "the temple is here, and nothing can happen to us. We are privileged and protected people. As long as the temple is here, nothing can touch us." God told them that the temple was not given for their own benefit but it was given with a purpose (1 Kings 8:41-43). Look also at verse 60 - the end of the prayer. Solomon closes saying, "So that all the peoples of the earth may know that the Lord is God and there is no other." So what is the purpose of God's temple? There were many other purposes, but one main purpose was that the peoples of the earth may know that Jehovah is God. That was His purpose.

God did not provide any institution or any structure to His people which do not have some relationship to His

missionary purpose. Today, when we cling onto our institutions and detach them from God's missionary purpose we get into strife, politics and problems and this is the curse of our institutions today. Institutions are given for missionary purposes. When we detach them from the blessing, it becomes a curse. God has given to us structures with a missionary purpose. When we magnify structures and make much of constitutions, we end up in court cases. God's purpose is always that His people should have these blessings so that His missionary purposes can be fulfilled. I'm not saying this, the Bible is saying this.

ii. **In Worship**

Again another stage in the history of God's people is their worship. God gives to them a system of worship. Look at the title of Psalm 67. It says here "For the director of music with stringed instruments a psalm." That means the psalm has to be used in worship regularly. So whenever they sang, what did they sing? Verse 1, 2, "May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine upon us. May your ways be known on earth, your salvation among all nations." Every time they sang they said "God bless us, be gracious to us so that your way may be known to the ends of the earth and your salvation to all nations." What about our worship? What about our praying? How much of it reflects God's missionary purpose? I know God has brought today a great spirit of release and freedom for worship. Praise God that we lift our hands and sing choruses. But do we keep in mind that we not only glorify and magnify Him by our songs, and lifting up of our hands but also by fulfilling His purpose? The church which maximizes in worship and ignores God's missionary purpose completely is out of God's will whether it is charismatic or non charismatic. I am not saying this, the Bible is saying this. Even in the prophecies you can find this to be true in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel - they all spoke to the nations. They had prophecies to the nations to move out, Philistia, Babylon, Egypt, Assyria. But then in the prophets you also find prophecies which reveal the missionary purpose of God.

iii. Through the Prophets

a. In Isaiah

Look at Isaiah. In 5 chapters, he mentions about the servant of the Lord in a distinct way. (Isaiah 42, 49, 50, 52, and 53) When you look at these passages, you find once again God's missionary purpose.

Isaiah 49:6 says, "Is it too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept? I will also make you a light for the Gentiles that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth." Did you notice in all these passages that there is a 2-tier promise? There is always the blessing for the people of God and the blessing for the nation. This 2-tier promise is traceable in all these verses. Here He says the servant of the Lord, the Messiah is for Israel. Then He says He will also be a light to the nations and He will be the one who will bring salvation to the ends of the earth.

In Isaiah 52:15, speaking of the suffering servant He says, "So will he sprinkle many nations and kings will shut their mouths because of him." The Hebrew can be accurately translated as 'sprinkled' and I believe that is more apt in the context because "He will sprinkle many nations." The idea is that He will be a sin offering and through His blood many nations will be sprinkled and cleansed. That is in keeping with what is in Isaiah 53. So the Messiah, the servant of the Lord would be a sin offering for all nations. He would sprinkle all nations. God's purpose is very clearly revealed there.

b. In Malachi

Then we come to Malachi the nameless prophet. His message was exclusively for the people of Israel, for their failures. In Malachi 1:11 He says, 'My Name will be great among the nations from the rising to the setting of the sun. In every place incense and offerings will be brought to my Name because My name will be great among the nations,' says the Lord Almighty." But look at that sweeping statement He makes- not just in Jerusalem, not just in the temple but in every place there will be incense that means prayer and offerings.

"In every place, offerings that are of a pure heart and pure spirit will be offered to me by the nations in all places." This was fulfilled in Christ. So can you accuse any of these prophets of being narrowly nationalistic? There might have been a Jonah among them who disobeyed but the message they carried was a message for all nations because it revealed God's purpose.

5. In the New Testament

Then we come to the New Testament and you notice God's purpose declared through our Lord Himself. You find it in Matthew 24:14, talking about the end times, He says, it is in the hands of the Father. But about that end, He also says, 'This Gospel of the kingdom would be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations and then the end will come.' Now you can interpret this dispensationally and say that this does not apply to us. But I can say that this word clearly points out that God has the nations and their receiving the Gospel in His heart, when He talks about the end or when He talks about the culmination, the climax of all things.

i. The Great Commission

In Matthew 28:19, 20, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded them and surely I will be with you always to the very end of the age." Notice it talks about making disciples of all nations. The central theme in the Great Commission is not baptizing, teaching or going because if you translate it literally from the Greek those are all participles. The main active verb is "make disciples of all nations." So He is saying to us, "Take this as your main commission wherever you are. You don't have to transfer yourself geographically."

Geographical transfer is not everything in missions. We often say, 'missions are going from Bangalore to Himachal Pradesh, or to Papua New Guinea.' Not necessarily. Wherever you are you make disciples of all nations, which means cross boundaries, cross linguistic boundaries, cross

cultural boundaries and so on. If God asks you to go to some difficult geographical place, obey Him. If He doesn't, wherever you are, you still can be making disciples, crossing boundaries. But I wonder if we have taken this very seriously? How many of us are making disciples, not only among our own people but across boundaries like Tamils making disciples among Kannadigas in Bangalore and so on. Or look at all the internationals in this city - The Iranians, the Africans and the Afghans, how many of us take that seriously? Now, it is not just geographical transfer - going over to some other place, but making disciples that is the main thing in this Commission. God may say to you, 'Go to this country or to this people or to this particular location.' You have to obey.

ii. In Revelation

Now we come to the last part of the book of Revelation. Revelation 5:9, 10 says "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals because you were slain and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe, language, people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God and they will reign on the earth." Did you notice this expression is repeated again here? What was said in Exodus 19 is repeated here in Revelation 5. That was given to the people of Israel and this is also given to the people of God - the Church. We read here that they were redeemed from all languages, all tribes and from all peoples so that they would become a kingdom and they would become priests to fulfill the purposes of God. That is the purpose of God the Father.

IV. The Son in Missions

We said the Son is also involved in missions. The Triune God is involved in God's missionary purpose - Not only the Father but also the Son. We find it in His earthly ministry. Jesus said, "I came only to the house of Israel. He did not go outside Palestine. Does that mean that Jesus did not have a world wide vision? No! John the Baptist introduced Him as the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world. So you see His ministry and His coming had something to do with the whole world.

1. To the Jews

In the Gospel of Matthew which is strictly a Gospel written to Jewish Christians, Jesus, talking about His own vision, declares in Matthew 8:11, "I say to you that many will come from the east and from the west and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven." He looked forward to that. He said, "Many will come from the east and the west, from all over and they will take their places in the feast in the kingdom of heaven along with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." He had a world-wide vision of all peoples, tribes, languages and of all nations.

2. To the Gentiles

In John 10:16, our Lord said, "I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, they too will listen to my voice and there shall be one flock and one shepherd." All this describes His ministry and in His message He clearly declared that He came for the whole world. What about His mission? Look at Matthew 16:18, He said, "I tell you that you are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church and the gates of hell will not overcome it." One may ask, "Where is the world-wide implication here?" Revelation 5:9, 10 not only reveals the purpose of God, it also reveals the action of God in the death of Christ on Calvary's Cross. Revelation 5:9, 10, from this viewpoint reveals, "You are worthy to take the scroll and open its seal because you were slain and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation."

Why did Christ die? Why did He shed His blood? Not only to save me as an individual, not only to build His church but also to build His church out of every tribe, language, people and every ethnic group. So, if the church is not planted among every group of people then the Calvary purpose is still to be fulfilled and we have to carry it forward. Christ has died; He shed His blood so that the church can be planted among every group of people. But now it is up to us to shed our blood if necessary to give our lives if necessary so that the Church can be planted. The very purpose for which Christ died was His mission. Verse 10 says, "Not only is the Church to be planted but that church should be a kingdom and it should be a community of priests to

serve Him." So you can see it in His ministry, His message and in His mission. The Son of God our Lord Jesus Christ has clearly pointed it out.

V. The Holy Spirit in Missions

Then what about the Holy Spirit? God's programme is carried out through the Holy Spirit. In the coming of the Spirit this is clearly implied. We read it in Luke 24 in the Great Commission passage verses 46-49-the coming of the Holy Spirit linked with the preaching of forgiveness to the nations of the earth.

1. The coming of the Holy Spirit can result in fine miraculous wonders. But essentially the coming of the Holy Spirit has to do with the forgiveness of sins and that Jesus is the Saviour from sin. As the deliverer from sin, as the liberator not from oppression, poverty, hunger and all of this, though we believe in freedom from all of that and as Christians we should be concerned with oppression, poverty and hunger, but Jesus' mission is not that primarily. His mission is to be a Saviour from sin. The coming of the Holy Spirit is primarily related to the proclamation of Jesus as Saviour from sin and if you relate the power of the Spirit to anything else and leave this out, it is not missions. The proclamation of Jesus as Saviour from sin (Luke 24:46-49) and the power that comes on the people of God, is linked with the proclaiming of the forgiveness of sin to the nations of the earth.

Then in John 20:19-23 He says, 'As the Father has sent me even so I send you,' and then He breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.' Then He said to them, 'Whosoever's sins you remit they will be remitted, and whosoever's sins you don't remit they will not be remitted.' What did He mean here? He was saying, 'you do not have the authority to forgive sins. Only Christ has the authority to forgive sins.' But He says, 'You have the authority to proclaim forgiveness of sins, to declare forgiveness of sins and you have the authority in the name of Christ to tell men and women that they can be forgiven if they believe in Christ and accept what He has done for them on the cross.'

So the coming of the Holy Spirit is related to the proclamation of forgiveness of sins. It is no wonder then that when the

apostles preached they always related the coming of the Holy Spirit to the forgiveness of sins and so the message is the forgiveness of sins and the coming of the Holy Spirit is to empower His people so that they would proclaim the forgiveness of sins.

2. What about Acts 1:8, 'You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in Judea and in Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth.' Jesus did not say, 'finish your work in Jerusalem and then go to Samaria, and then finish it there and then go to Judea, and then go to the uttermost parts of the earth.' No, he means 'Simultaneously when you are doing the work in Jerusalem, it must also be done in Samaria, it must also be done in Judea and also in the uttermost parts of the earth.'

Our friends from the USA are not missionaries in India because they have completed the job in the USA. There is still much more to be done there. We can't tell them, 'Go home and do it there, nor can they tell us, "You do it in India and nowhere else." It has to be done at the same time in all places. If you say "let me finish it first here in Karnataka." I will say "you are out of God's order."

Do you have a burden for the unreached peoples and places in the rest of India? Praise God for your burden for Tamil Nadu but do you have a burden for other places and people in India, and the world? Because Jesus had, and the Holy Spirit will empower you so that you will be his witnesses and the witness will be carried out in all of these places simultaneously. We may not all be in different places at one time, but we can see that the witness is carried out to all places through our involvement, prayers, support and through our going. So the coming of the Holy Spirit is linked with God's missionary purpose.

If your church or if you as an individual talk much about the Holy Spirit and all experiences of the Holy Spirit, gifts of the Holy Spirit and yet have no missionary vision, you have got out of God's order and I pray that the Holy Spirit Himself will set you right. Praise God for all which you receive from the Holy Spirit but remember it is not for exhibition or entertainment. It is empowering so that the world may hear, so that the nations may hear, so that the Gospel may go to all peoples of the earth. God's missionary purpose may be fulfilled.

3. Then we come to the continuing work of the Holy Spirit. You look at the Book of Acts and throughout it you will find the Holy Spirit has one burden, and I pray that will come through to us as we study the book of Acts afresh. He goes to Philip and says, 'leave all this big revival and blessing here, and go to the desert. I want you to talk to the Egyptian eunuch, so that through him the Gospel will go to the upper part of the Nile region that is North Africa.' It may not be modern Ethiopia, but it refers to all of that upper part of the Nile region. It may include Sudan and Ethiopia as well. So you see how the Holy Spirit speaks to Philip. Then the Spirit said to Peter, 'you got a vision Peter but now there are 3 men waiting for you, go with them and speak to Cornelius and his household so the Gospel will break the barrier and go into the Gentile world that is in Acts 10.' In Acts 13 the Holy Spirit said to the Church in Antioch, 'I want you to set apart Paul and Barnabas so that the Gospel will break all boundaries and barriers and go into the rest of Asia and Europe.' They sent them out as missionaries on their missionary journey.

We are limiting the Holy Spirit to the upper room, to our all night prayer meetings and to our fasting and prayer times and perhaps to signs and wonders and all other things. All these are necessary but don't limit Him. Don't revolve only around these things in a circle; otherwise you will fall into Satan's strategy which is to get God's people on the sidelines so they become useless railway carriages when they should be on the mainline carrying out God's missionary purpose. May God deliver us from this! The Holy Spirit came and He is continuously at work so that the people may hear the Gospel, the nations, the tribes and the languages may have a church planted among them.

This is what the Bible is all about. God the Father has promised it. The Son of God came with this mission and fulfilled His ministry with this purpose. His messages had this burden. The Holy Spirit came on His people with this purpose and continued His work with this purpose. If we miss this we have missed everything.

9. Together In Mission Church and Para Church Agencies

The Pastor of a large city church was speaking to me some time back. He said, "They come into the church as though they are helping but they take away our money and men. They also compete with the church. They hold their prayer meetings at the same time when we have our church prayer meetings." He was referring to a Para church mission agency. The leader of a Para church mission agency complained, "The pastors never allow us to have missionary meetings in their churches. They also discourage their people from supporting us. They have no missionary interest." Those of us who are involved in ministering in churches as well as in Para church agencies are familiar with such statements. They reflect a very real tension that exists between the churches and Para church mission agencies.

Legitimacy of para church agencies

Para church mission agencies are not of the devil. Nor are they unscriptural.

In the beginning of missions in the early Church we note that the Antioch Church sent out Paul and Barnabas as their missionaries and they came back and reported to them. We do not read about any control the Church exercised over this missionary team regarding their programme. The same thing happened after Paul's second missionary journey. In his third missionary journey we read that Paul had an inter-church missionary team with him. "He was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy also, and from the province of Asia Tychicus and Trophimus" (Acts 20:4). Perhaps these men were commended and supported by their local churches. But we do not read that these churches had any control over their programme. This was perhaps the beginning of inter-church mission agencies.

2. We see this development in history also. When William Carey wanted to go as a missionary to India, his Baptist denomination did not support him. He told a group of men who were praying for him and encouraging him. "Yonder in India is a gold mine. I will descend and dig. You at home must hold the ropes." That was the beginning of the Baptist Missionary Society which began as a Para church missionary society and was later accepted by the denomination. With much difficulty the evangelical Para church missionary agency called the Church Missionary Society was later accepted by the Church of England. Young Mr. V.S. Azariah (who later became Bishop V.S. Azariah) gathered a few praying people who were burdened about taking the Gospel to those who had not heard it and began the Indian Missionary Society. He was not understood or accepted by the pastors in those days. Later, the IMS became the accepted missionary society of the Tirunelveli Diocese.

3. Para Church organizations have contributed much to revival and to spiritual life in the major denominations in India. In earlier history we think of the impact of the Church Missionary Society on the Syrian churches in Kerala. In the 1950s we think of the impact of organizations like the Vacation Bible School movement, Youth for Christ, Union of Evangelical Students of India and the Evangelical Fellowship of India on the major denominations in our country. Also we cannot ignore the influence of interdenominational, evangelical seminaries on the denominations.

Inter-denominational Para church missionary societies were started in the late 1800s and early 1900s. This process is still going on. In India there are more than 100 such agencies.

4. The impact of these Para church missionary societies on the Indian churches is very significant. Most of these societies started in the 1960s and mushroomed in the 1980s. As a result, missionary awakening came to the churches, evangelistic outreach increased, Mission Boards were set up and missionaries were sent out by different denominations.

Missionary giving increased in the churches and many young people stepped out as missionaries. Though the criticism is often voiced that Para church mission agencies are taking away the money from the churches, it is not proved that the income of the churches has gone down because of this. On the other hand there is strong evidence that the income of many churches has increased when people started giving to missions.

ii. The Relationship between church and para church agencies

It is not easy for a local church or even a denomination to set up a mission structure to survey the unreached peoples, to supervise missionary work and give effective direction and to provide training and pastoral care for the missionaries. On the other hand the mission agency will be able to do this being a task-oriented organization. Instead of looking at the Para church mission agency as a rival, the local church or the denomination must accept it as its arm or servant and use its service. The Church does not seek to bring it under its structure or hierarchy. If we do not identify the Church with the denominational structure or its hierarchy but accept the biblical view of the people of God, there will be a better understanding of the Para church agencies resulting in a better relationship with them.

There are some beautiful relationships that exist even now between local churches or denominations and Para church mission agencies. There are some local churches which send their missionaries through these agencies and support them. Those who do not have their own missionaries to send, adopt missionaries who are designated by the mission agency and support them. The missionary sends his report to them regularly and spends some time with them when he comes on vacation. He is considered as their missionary working with the Para church mission agency. Some denominations in North East India have also done this. This is a model of partnership between the churches and Para church mission agencies.

III. The principles to follow

Now, turning to Para church mission agencies, I want to point out certain principles which they must follow. They should consider

themselves as a **mere scaffold** while the Church is the building.

1. Our main goal is to build the Church (Matthew 16:18). The Para church agency is not a substitute Church. It should not compete with the Church and have its programmes in competition with the church. It should limit itself to the restricted objectives for which God has raised it up and not seek to carry out the programmes which the Church is better fitted to carry out.

Also, they should not consider the churches as mere milking cows for their programmes.

2. They should seek to build up the Church through teaching and training programmes. When they minister to the Church, they can expect the Church to provide money and people. This was the principle Paul followed. He wrote to the Church at Rome though he had not founded it. He wanted to visit them and minister to them so he could enlist their support for his mission to Spain (Roman 15:24). He considered the Philippian Church as his partner in the Gospel and solicited their support for his work because he had ministered to them. Para church agencies should not go to the churches merely for their promotion with high pressure tactics. They should minister to the people and then anticipate their help in a spirit of partnership.

They can get the help and cooperation of the churches in recruiting their missionary candidates and training them. The local church can provide the initial, basic training needed for the missionary candidate. A candidate should be recruited with the good recommendation and support of his local church.

3. The Para church agency should also maintain its accountability to the Church, the People of God by being open about their finances and by frequent reporting and communication. Missions is not an individualistic enterprise run by independent minded people who would not submit to the Body of Christ or be accountable to it. The key word that should characterize the relationship between the churches and Para church mission agencies is Partnership, not control or independence. They should recognize that they are together in mission.

10. Reaching every Tribe, Language and People (The 20th Century Missionary Challenge in India)

A young man told me, "I want to be a missionary in South East Asia." I asked him, "Why did you choose South East Asia?" He said, "Because the need is great there." I asked him, "Do you know that India is the largest unreached country in the world that is open for missions?" He was very surprised. Yes, India is the greatest challenge for cross cultural missions.

Ours is a country of staggering variety with many cultures, languages and ethnic groups. We do not see the missionary challenge in India in terms of geographical or political divisions, that is, in terms of States or Districts and not even in terms of North and South.

I. Unreached People Groups

1. **We see the unreached people groups** wherever they may be in rural or urban areas in whatever State or District, in the North or in the South and accept them as the objects of our missionary concern and outreach. Districts and states are manmade, often created with political motives. God sees the human race as a beautiful mosaic consisting of various ethnic groups, languages and cultures.
2. **Church must be planted in every People group.** The Song of the Lamb says, "You were slain and with your blood you purchased men for God **from every tribe and language and people and nation**" (Revelation 5:9). Let us look at this challenge a little closer.

II. People of other Faiths

The majority of the people of our land are

1. **Hindus** but they are divided into many cultural, linguistic and ethnic groups. There is no church among some of these groups particularly in the Hindi belt. We need to concentrate our prayers on these groups and target them for our outreach. Certainly we need to look for the keys that would unlock the hearts of these peoples and work out suitable strategies. But

we must not forget that it is a spiritual warfare. Jesus our Lord said, "How can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can rob his house" (Matthew 12:29). He also taught us how "the strong man" can be bound. "I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven" (Matthew 18:18, 19).

The next largest religious group is the

2. **Muslims.** India has the second largest Muslim population in the world today next to Indonesia. By 2000 it may have the largest Muslim population and yet there are many people groups among them without a witness or a Church. Missionary efforts among them are relatively few.
3. **The Sikhs** are a neglected group as far as missions are concerned. Because of the present situation there is more openness to the Gospel among them. We must take note of this responsiveness and respond to this challenge.
4. **There** are more than five crores of **tribal people** in India divided among 427 tribal groups. Indian missions are busy working among some of them. There are yet some tribes among whom there is no Church and they do not have the Scriptures in their languages. This is an urgent situation because there are other influences at work among them which may close the door to the Gospel.

III. Urbanization

1. There is a **Growing urban challenge** in our country. India is still predominantly rural and so we should be sending our missionaries to the villages of India. But the situation is fast changing. By 2000 twenty Indian cities will have at least one crore population in each. Fifty percent of these will be poor people living in slums. The number of slums in our cities is increasing. If each local church in a city can adopt two slums for their missionary involvement, the need can be met. Our slums

become centres of oppression, violence and sin. A visitor to one of these large slums was appalled at the squalor and darkness that he saw and was discouraged. Suddenly in the midst of all there was a cross on top of a hut. He asked his host what it was. He said that it was a newly planted church in that slum. Immediately the feeling of despair and hopelessness was gone. The Gospel that transforms individuals and peoples is the answer to the urban challenge.

Our **universities** are churning out graduates by the hundreds. There is a vast population of university students in India. These are potential leaders of the country. This challenge cannot be ignored. **Andaman Nicobar Islands** on the east and **Lakshadweep islands** on the west are a part of the Indian challenge. Though several Indian missions and churches are working in the Andamans, there are still some unreached people groups like the Bengalis.

According to the Bible Society of India there are 1650 languages spoken in India. Portions of Scripture are translated in only 150 of these. There are no Scriptures in some languages spoken by more than 10,000 people.

There is urgency in reaching these unreached people groups. There are dark clouds in the horizon and we do not know how long we will have the freedom to preach the Gospel in this land. Certainly we do not look at the wind and the weather to do the sowing and reaping for our Lord. We will continue to do it even if there will be restrictions, imprisonment or death. But we must use the opportunities now. Also, this is harvest time among some people groups. There is amazing response among them and we must make use of this opportunity.

What is the bottleneck? Is it lack of money? Those of us who work with indigenous missions know how Christians and churches in our country respond with financial support when they are rightly challenged and motivated. So lack of money is not the problem. Nor is it the lack of sophisticated equipment. We are aware of the vast number of faithful, barefooted missionaries who surmount all kinds of barriers to take the Gospel to the unreached people.

3. **The real bottleneck is the lack of missionary awareness** and involvement on the part of many Christians in our churches. There is so much nominalism and lethargy that they even oppose missionary efforts. There must be systematic and Spirit-anointed preaching and teaching of the Word of God in the churches so the Christians become truly consecrated to God's purpose and get involved in missions.

Our pastors and church leaders must recognize the priority of missions in the life of the Church and commit themselves to making the churches missionary minded. Our Bible College and Seminary teachers must recognize this and train Christian workers with a passion to reach the unreached. Our lay people must be challenged to consecrate themselves for God's missionary purpose so they get involved in mission. Our goal is that **"from every tribe and language and people"** in India there is a gathered community for our Lord.

11. Lay Person's Role in Missions

Church likened to a Football Stadium

A reporter of a national newspaper approached a football coach. He asked him, 'How does football contribute to the health and wellbeing of our nation? The coach thought for a moment and then he said, 'I do not know if football contributes to the national health and well being. There are 20,000 to 25,000 people sitting on the stands, watching, probably drinking campa cola and eating peanuts, and then there are 11 on each side, 22 altogether, sweating it out, working hard out there in the centre of the field. Now how is this going to contribute to national health and well being, I do not know,' he said. He was honest.

Now that gives you a picture of a church. There are a few who are working hard, and most of the people in our churches are spectators on the stands. We tell the people how to kick the ball and we scold them if they don't kick right and if a goal is scored against a team which we love, we then criticize and we go to war even with brothers or whatever we can take on hand. Now it's exactly the picture of a football stadium. That is what we find in the church. That is not how it is intended to be.

Factors in Missions

1. Division between Clergy and Laity a Fallacy

There are some fallacies which we should get out of our mind. One fallacy is that there are lay people and clergy or priests in the church. I do not know how this distinction came about. It probably came in the middle ages. Probably it came, as some researchers have pointed out through a gradual erosion of faith in spiritual gifts. When a church believed in spiritual gifts, the spiritual gifts that are given to all believers, everything seemed to be going alright. There was no distinction such as the laity and the clergy. But then because of the misuse and the misunderstanding of the use of certain gifts, such as the gift of tongues and the gift of prophecy, there was a period in the history of the church when those who spoke about these gifts much were isolated, the rest of the church began to look on those who were talking about these gifts with suspicion, and

then came the strict division between the clergy, that is the pastors, the priest, the minister on the one side, and the ordinary members on the other side. So this unscriptural distinction continues today in several of our denominations. Thank God it is not found in all the churches. Because of that we think to ourselves that the ordinary believer, whom we call the layperson, can be excused from a lot of responsibilities, and involvement.

2. Fallacy caused by Cultural factors

Then there is one more factor which is peculiar to our country and culture. It is this: Most of us are converts, or our forefathers were converts from Hinduism or Islam. In these religions there is a priestly class. For example a Hindu priest does all that is to be done in religion. The people don't have to do anything. All they have to do is give offerings and feed the priest and take care of the priests and he does everything for them. The same is true in Islam and Buddhism. This has crept into our churches because of our cultural background. So we think the Pastor exists merely to come and pray at the birthday party, to solemnize a wedding or to bury or baptize somebody. Then he does everything for us. He preaches, he performs and he carries on with the programme. The rest of us just derive the benefit. Now these practices are not scriptural. This is a fallacy; this distinction does not exist in the Bible.

3. Why involvement in Missions?

What does the Bible say about the people of God? The people of God are priests. All of them are priests; all of them have a responsibility. Every member of the people of God is a priest. The Bible also says that the people of God are witnesses. Every one of them is a witness. Then the Bible also says that the people of God are the Servant of God, not only individually, but corporately. Are we convinced of that for each one of us? Are you convinced that you are a servant of God? That is basic, whatever your profession is, whatever your occupation is-you are a servant of God. Only on that basis we can build further. So we are convinced that all of us who are born again, who are believers, who are children of God, are called to service. If we are called to service, and if we are serving Him in the local

church and through the local church then we have to be involved in missions.

4. Involvement of every Believer

How do I define the mission of the local church-In the immediate neighbourhood and to the ends of the earth. So every believer must have some part in mission in the immediate neighbourhood and to the ends of the earth. Suppose you are involved in slum work in the city where your church is located, or you occasionally go out for evangelistic work in the city where your church is located or in the nearby villages or your state or your community. It is fine. However there is still another part of your involvement which you are to fulfill. What are you doing to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth? You say, 'Well that is something that I have worked out and I have thought about. Where does the Bible say that I should not be involved in it?' When we consider the biblical basis of missions we see that Abraham was given a 2 tier promise.

God said to Abraham, 'I will bless you.' Then in almost the same breath, God said to him, 'I will make you a blessing to the families of the earth, to the clans of the earth, to the people of the earth.' In that promise, God brought together all those who would believe in Christ because they are the true children of Abraham. So if you are a believer you are a true child of Abraham, descendant of Abraham and you inherit the duty of promise. The duty of promise is that you will be blessed in Christ with all of heaven's richest blessings and you will also be a blessing to all the families of the earth. Biblically it is therefore established that every believer must have some part in taking the Gospel to those who have never heard it.

5. Mission is not geographical transfer

That does not mean geographical transfer. Supposing there is an invalid who is not able to move out of her bed. This really happened in a home for invalids in South India which I visited a few years back. There was an invalid who could not even move her hands, could not move her feet. She was lying just looking up at the roof. Below her neck nothing was active. She could speak and she could eat. Everything was done for her. She was radiant because she knew Jesus Christ. She was listening to

radio programmes. There was a transistor nearby. Others helped to tune that radio. Then there was a missionary magazine. She began asking questions about the work in Himachal Pradesh. I said to myself, 'Here is a woman who cannot move out of her bed. Yet she is a blessing to the people in Kullu Valley, to the Kullu people.' That is possible.

6. Mission for all Abraham's children

You may not go as a missionary but still you can fulfill that promise, be a blessing to the peoples of the earth. That is the thrill of involvement in world evangelization. You may be an unknown, obscure person living in a small place which nobody can locate on any map, yet you are linked with God's purpose for the whole world, for the peoples of the earth, all because you are a child of Abraham. So there is a biblical basis to show that you should be concerned for those who have not heard the Gospel. Brother, Sister will you decide that you will do all that you can, give all that you have and give yourself so that the Gospel can be taken to the ends of the earth? You will have a part in the mission to the ends of the earth. Now that is obligatory, that is the biblical mandate for every believer.

7. Luke- Man used in Missions

Let's look at some practical things, having established the biblical basis that every believer is a servant of God and every believer must be involved in mission in the neighbourhood and to the ends of the earth. There are examples in Scripture. Look at some of the people who were used in mission.

Take a man like Luke. What was Luke's profession? He was a doctor. In Colossians 4:13 Paul calls him the beloved physician. What was this beloved physician doing? Did he preach a sermon? We have his writings, the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts. However we don't have his sermons. Did he ever preach at all? We do not know, but what was he doing? There are some things we can infer. One, he was very close to Paul. In the book of Acts 16 he is introduced to us. When the group that was with Paul left Philippi, Luke is included in that group because he begins to use the pronoun 'we' from that section onwards. Somewhere along the way he is not with them, then again in Acts 20 he is found with them. He sticks very close to

Paul.

When Paul was serving his last imprisonment on this earth, when he was in jail before his death, he says, 'Luke alone is with me.' How could Luke be with him in that Roman jail? It is possible that Aristarchus who we are told, was also with him and Luke declared themselves to be Paul's personal slaves or attendants. They were allowed to be with him. Luke was with him. Why was Luke so close to him and staying with him all the time? It is possible that Luke was attending to Paul's physical needs.

Paul was not a very healthy man. There is evidence for it. He talks about his thorn in the flesh which certainly was a physical handicap. It was not a little demon sent to torment him. We don't believe God sends little demons to torment his children. Demons do come, but then God is in control. Then it was a physical malady. Was it malaria, epileptic fits or defective eyesight? We do not know, but something physical. It is possible that Luke was there to help him at such times. So that was part of his ministry.

8. Gift of Helps

Suppose God calls you to be an assistant, to be a second person to someone in that way, to give your service. You may not be a preacher, you may not be in a sense a full time worker, a person who is an evangelist or a teacher even, but then called to be a helper. Do you know, in the gifts of the Spirit in 1 Cor.12:28, the gift of helps is mentioned as one of the gifts? So, some of us may be called to exercise that gift in the fulfilling of mission.

9. Miraculous / Natural Healing?

Now did Luke always use his medical practice? Probably he used it in taking care of Paul. There is one more evidence in Acts 28:8, 9. You notice something very interesting. They were in the island called Malta. Publius the chief official of the island invited them to his home. Publius' father was sick. We read in verse 8 of Acts 28, his father was sick in bed suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and after prayer placed his hands on him and healed him. Then look at verse 9, when this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured. Now the NIV uses rightly two different words in English,

because in Greek they are two different words. The first word 'healed' can be divine healing, miraculous healing. The second word need not be that. It can be healing that comes in the normal, natural process, even using medicines. So it is not scriptural or right to say that we should not use medicines. Of course, if you make an idol of the medicine bottle, injection syringe then it is wrong. But to use medicines in itself is not sinful. Any teaching which says so is not biblical. We don't worship medicines. We don't depend on them. It is God who heals.

10. Medical Service as missions

But, then there is a place for medical service. God may call that we use our medical service. The reason why I want to say this is because some medical people get into a guilt feeling and they want to give up their medical profession and preach the Gospel. Now there are some who are called to do that. I know of some fine medical people who have done that and God has given to them the gift of teaching and preaching. They have said goodbye to their medical profession and they are involved in preaching and teaching. Thank God for that. But not all have to do that. You can practice your medicine and still be a preacher. Or like Luke, wherever needed you can use your medical training. When it is not needed, put it on the shelf, or allow God to put it on the shelf. That is a wonderful example of a person who may not be in a sense a full time Christian worker but was totally flexible and available for God to be used in his mission.

11. Make Disciples while Tent-making

Then we think of Aquila and Priscilla. It seems they were trained by Paul- Very true. Paul's disciples they were in a sense. But then they were tent makers by trade. Wherever they went they practiced their tent making. They were in Rome to begin with, they were in Corinth, then they were in Ephesus, then we read that they were in Rome. Wherever they went they were using this trade, and they were teaching and preaching and making disciples. And may I say this to you my friend? Making disciples is a call to all believers. We saw it in the great commission passage, Matt. 28:18-20, baptizing and teaching are merely participles. Even going is a participle. The main action verb

there in the Greek is, making disciples.

By going, make disciples. Some people merely go. They don't even know why they are going and where they are going. That is tragic, isn't it? As you go here and there, make disciples. That is what that verse implies. He doesn't mean you transfer yourself from this location to that location, and then you become a missionary. There are some people who transfer location and yet do not make disciples. They are not missionaries in the biblical sense. Wherever you are, you are called to make disciples. When you cross cultures, when you cross barriers of culture or language and make disciples, then you become a cross cultural missionary. But you may cross culture, and if you don't make disciples, how can you be a missionary?

Aquila and Priscilla were making disciples wherever they went with their trade. God may call us to do that. Place your profession, your business, your practice of law, your medicine, your engineering, your secretarial skill in His hands and say, 'Lord wherever you take me I will go, but I have one business and that is to make disciples. I practice my profession just to earn my living. But my main calling is to make disciples.'

12. Go where God calls

Now there are some people who would say, 'I am not called to be a missionary and I will be a teacher'- Fine. But where will you be a teacher? 'Well I want to be close to my mother on this side, my mother in law on the other side.' God have mercy on you for more than one reason. Now if you put your teaching in God's hands and say, 'Lord I am willing to go wherever you call me. And I'll be a teacher in the place where you call me.' Arunachal Pradesh needs teachers, school teachers. Nagaland needs teachers. They are always asking us, 'Will you send us teachers? Graduate teachers or someone who is a raw graduate without teacher training, who can teach.'

In Kashmir there are schools run by the Church of North India. They want evangelical teachers who can win souls and disciple people. Where do we find them? Where are the teachers? In Tamil Nadu there is such unemployment among teachers, and yet they will not move out of Tamil Nadu because they like

MGR. Forego your preferences. Give up your idols, and move out where God will call you with your job. That's what Aquila and Priscilla did.

II. Full-time or Part Time

Then Timothy, how do you classify Timothy? We don't read that he was an apostle, but he was evidently in full time Christian work. But Timothy, to me, is a beautiful example of God's errand boy, an errand boy for God. Wherever there was need, he was sent by Paul. Sent to Philippi, sent to Corinth, and it was like going into the lion's den for Timothy to go to those rude Corinthians. Yet he went. Then He sent him to Ephesus. So he was God's errand boy. God needs errand boys, to say, 'Lord I am here to fill a need-a medical doctor, yes.' God may not call you to go to a mission field, to an unreached area. But you say, 'I'll give my time to fill a gap if some doctor goes on vacation, or if there is some medical work where there are personnel needed, I'll give six months of my time.' How wonderful to be God's errand boys.

1. Same Consecration, different Location

What I'm arriving at is, there is no distinction between those who are called to be full time missionaries to go to some place, and the others of us who will not be called to do that. In involvement there is no difference. You have the same burden, the same concern to take the Gospel to those who have never heard it. There is no difference in involvement. In consecration there is no difference. They are not heroes of consecration. The same consecration is required of those who go there and those who may not be called to go somewhere. In sacrifice there is no difference. There should not be any difference.

The only difference is in the location. Who determines the location? God does. Today He says, 'you be a doctor in Bangalore or you be a teacher in Bangalore, or to me He may say, 'You be a mission administrator in Bangalore.' Tomorrow if He says, 'You be out there in Rajasthan or somewhere,' I should be willing. I want to say this to you, I face this before Him. Otherwise I would not be telling you. So it is not the location. Consecration, sacrifice, obedience, involvement, they are all the same. Location is determined by Him. Wherever we are, we make disciples; we are involved in taking the Gospel to those who have never heard it. Then He may say, 'I want you for six months

in this place,' or He may say, 'I want you for a lifetime in this place.' We give ourselves as He calls us.

Spiritual gifts-secret of service

How do we go about this? Here I am a person who is not called very clearly for full time missionary service. How can I be involved in missions? Or if I may use that word, the lay person, how can a lay person be involved in mission? The key to this is our understanding of spiritual gifts. This is important. Otherwise, without the understanding of spiritual gifts, we get into service; we will get frustrated because not all can do everything. Sometimes some of us think that because we cannot do everything we cannot do anything. Some people may not do everything, but they do something. Blessed are those people. How do we avoid that kind of confusion and that kind of frustration? Spiritual gifts are the secret.

iii. Gifts of the Spirit

What do we read about spiritual gifts in the Bible? You read about them in 1 Cor. 12, Ephesians 4 and 1 Peter 4, - these four passages. People talk about nine spiritual gifts. If you read these passages carefully you and I must come to the conclusion that these lists are not comprehensive. There may be more gifts than those listed here. Nowhere it is said, 'This is it, there are no more.' So there may be other gifts which you discover, which the Spirit will help you to discover. These are gifts of the Spirit. The Scripture says that there is the Holy Spirit who distributes them. If you turn to 1 Cor. 12, we read in verse 11, 'all these are the work of the one and same Spirit and He gives them to each one just as He determines.' The Holy Spirit gives these gifts. That is why they are called spiritual gifts. Therefore they are supernatural gifts.

iv. Natural Talents sharpened by the Spirit

There are some people who confuse spiritual gifts and natural talents. They say, well, natural talents are also given by God; spiritual gifts are also given by God. How then do you distinguish them? There is a distinction I believe. There is a reason why these are distinctly called spiritual gifts. The difference is this. A person may not have natural talents, but he may have spiritual gifts. A person may have a

natural talent, say the gift of teaching. Campbell Morgan was a schoolteacher. God used that natural talent of teaching. He anointed it, intensified it, and empowered it so that He used it supernaturally. It can happen. A natural talent is taken by the Holy Spirit, sharpened, intensified, empowered so that in the exercise of that natural talent there is a supernatural dimension. Therefore natural talents are not the same as spiritual gifts.

2. Kinds of Gifts

i. Gifts that build up the Church

Say, 'Lord, I don't give up, because I am not a talented singer or a talented writer or speaker. Give me your spiritual gifts,' and don't dictate to Him what He should give. Leave it to Him. One thing you can say, 'Give me those gifts which will help me to build your church.' Paul says that is what we should ask. 'Seek to excel in those gifts which build the church,' he says in 1 Corinthians 14:12. 'So Lord give me those gifts which will help me to build the church for your sake, for the sake of your church, for the sake of your missionary cause. Give me gifts or help me to discover the gifts that you have given.' Now some people may ask, if there is a gift given to all believers, to every believer, then why should I pray for a gift? Now that is a very difficult question, is it not? If you look at that verse carefully, what Paul is saying here in 1 Cor. 14:1 is 'follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy.'

Verse 12 says, 'Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church. Now, Paul is very clearly stating here that we should desire those gifts which seek to build the church. Does he mean there that we should seek to discover and develop those gifts which will be useful in building the church? Or does he mean that we should ask for those gifts? The Scripture says very clearly that every believer, every member of the body has a function. If he has a function he has a gift, and these gifts are distributed by the Holy Spirit. I believe we have to see this in balance in the proper context. The Holy Spirit is sovereign and gifts are given to all believers, but in our own yearning, in our own longing, in our own

motive and incentive, we should desire those gifts which will help us to build the church, not promote ourselves, or to make us more superior to others. That is the implication here. So we seek the development of those gifts, or long for those gifts which will help us to build the church. These are spiritual gifts.

ii. **Grace Gifts**

Then secondly, they are grace gifts. Now this is mentioned in Romans 12:3, 'For by the grace given me I say to everyone of you,' and then note what he says, 'Do not think of yourselves more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.' Then verse 6, 'We have different gifts according to the grace given us.' So he says, 'You should accept it by faith (your gift) because it is by grace.' So these are grace gifts. It doesn't depend upon my fasting and prayer, doesn't depend on my spirituality, or my holiness but are given by the sovereign will of the Holy Spirit and they are according to grace. We have nothing to boast about. Suppose you are able to develop a gift and use it and in the using of the gift God blesses you and you get recognition, there is no pride in that. There is no merit in that. It is all by grace.

iii. **Gifts of the triune God.**

We do not become Unitarians, in talking about spiritual gifts. This is a danger today in charismatic and Pentecostal groups. Praise God for them but the danger is that you talk so much about the Holy Spirit and then from then on you get into the Jesus Only doctrine or some other bypath, and then you become a Unitarian. So, to avoid that pitfall we are firm on the basis of Scripture that spiritual gifts are from the triune God. Turn to 1 Cor. 12:4. There are different kinds of gifts but the same Spirit. The Holy Spirit distributes gifts according to verse 5. There are different kinds of service but the same Lord. It is the Lord of the church, our Lord Jesus Christ, the second person of the trinity, the Son of God who assigns to each man his task in the church. It is He who gives us the service because He is the Lord of the church. Then God, the Father, works all of them in all men. It is the Father who works through us and in

us, enabling us to use these gifts- The Spirit, the Son and the Father. Spiritual gifts are of the triune God.

iv. Context of Body of Christ.

Then we notice, the spiritual gifts are to be exercised in the context of the body of Christ. We are not to become loners, individualists, or individual shining stars using our spiritual gifts. This is a danger today. We find here the total teaching of Scripture is that the gifts are used in the context of the body. Look at 1 Cor. 12:7. To each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. So it is given for the common good, for the body. Then you look at 1 Cor.14:12. So it is with you, since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church.

- v. These gifts are used for the common good, for the building up of the body. Please look at Ephesians 4:11, 12. It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity of the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature attaining to the full measure of the fullness of Christ. Did you notice there he talks about corporate service, he talks about corporate growth, and he talks about corporate maturity.

These are things which we ignore today and it is sad. We look to a man with spiritual gifts and isolate him from the body and then we make him almost to be a witch doctor, a fortune teller or some kind of priest for ourselves. This again comes from our culture. We have to guard against that. The gifts of the Spirit are to be used in the context of the body. A man who refuses to use the gifts of the Spirit in the discipline and the fellowship of the body is in great danger of taking bypaths. This has happened doctrinally, morally and in experience. It is through the body that the service of Christ is carried out. Let's remember that. The gifts of the Spirit are to be used in the body.

IV. Discovering your Gifts

1. **Explore:** Here are a few practical hints as to how you can discover your gift so that you can take your place in missions.

There are four words you should remember. The first word is explore. Here is a believer who does not know what gifts he has. A believer may have one gift or more than one gift. He may have several gifts. Then the Spirit of God will guide him in the exercise of those gifts. He may have to give pre-eminence to one of those, because again, the criterion is the building up of the church and the common good. How do you know that you have this gift? By observation, by study of the Scriptures, by doing what God has asked you to do. By being observant and discerning you can explore your own gifts. However don't just sit there saying, 'until I discover my gifts I 'm not going to do anything.' How can you discover your gift unless you explore? Do what is to be done immediately.

Now there are examples for this. In Acts 6, Stephen had gifts, he had the gift of miracles, and he had the gift of preaching. Philip had the gift of being an evangelist. Now did those men know this? No. All that they said was, 'we are willing to do anything that needs to be done.' So the church said, the people of God said, 'alright we need some people to serve at tables, to take care of administration, so that the needs of those widows could be met.' So they were put to work in that way. As they did that, persecution came and they were scattered. Philip went around preaching wherever he went. As he was preaching, the gift of evangelism was discovered. So, in Acts 21, Philip the server at table is referred to as Philip the evangelist. By doing what was to be done immediately, his gift was manifested and he could discover it.

The same is true with Stephen. He began as one who served at the tables. Then he discovered his gifts and they were exercised and used. This may be true in your case. Begin teaching a Sunday school. Or begin with some involvement in your local church in missions; doing what you can to see that missions going to the neighbourhood and to the ends of the earth is fulfilled. As you do it, your gifts will be discovered. So, explore.

2. **Experiment:** Now this goes with just what I have written earlier. Don't hesitate. Don't withdraw. The man who will not do anything because he wants to do something great will never accomplish anything. Suppose you are sitting there saying, 'I

want to be a great missionary, a great preacher, influence multitudes,' you will be just sitting there and you will not do anything. There are some men and some women who are doing that. The common expression they use is, 'I am waiting for any open door.' What open door do you need? Get going. Do what is to be done immediately. There is a work for you to do, and as you do it, as you experiment then you will discover what gifts you have and what particular way God will lead you. I want to tell you, there is a place for all kinds of people.

I met a young man in England a few years back in a missionary conference, and he was so excited because a mission in Asia had called him to be taking movies. They said, 'we have a place in our mission. You come and do this and then be a disciple maker.' He never thought that as a movie maker he would have a part in missions. He thought that missionaries wear those 'topies', those big broad hats and stand under some coconut trees and speak to some half dressed natives. That was his concept of mission. This of course was some fifteen years back. Some may even have that concept today. So he thought, 'what place can I have in missions, as one who can make movies?' But when he heard this, he was thrilled. So anything that you have, your training, your gift, your ability can be used.

A young man applied to IEM, and he said, 'I am an electrician, I'm a plumber, I'm a driver, I'm an auto mechanic, but please don't ask me to preach. Do you have a place for me?' To him, we said, 'Yes we have a place. Auto mechanics, plumbers, electricians have a place, but remember you must be a disciple maker. Don't just be meddling with that vehicle all the time because our mission is people-centred.' I know that Operation Mobilization uses all kinds of people. I want to ask those who are in O.M. as auto mechanics and those who meddle with machines.

Are you a disciple maker? Or are you so occupied with that machine and it is so easy to hide behind that machine, because you don't have to face people and face the offence of the cross, and the offence of the Gospel. You may not be a preacher, or a teacher, preaching to crowds, but whatever you do and whatever your training and abilities are, you must be a disciple

maker, in your context. God may call you as a veterinarian to deal with cows, but then you are not to be preoccupied with cows and chickens because you will not find fulfillment in that. You should also be a disciple maker in your context. Use what you have and use your training and your gifts. At the same time, remember that your call is to be a disciple maker. So, experiment.

4. **Evaluate:** Here we need objectivity and honesty. Suppose you really want to sing and everybody else thinks that you should not sing and cannot sing, you'd better accept it some day or some time, the sooner the better for all of us that you cannot sing. Some who do not accept this, torment the rest of us. So you must be honest about what God has given. Evaluate what God has given you. If you are not a teacher, please don't do that. I know there are some who teach in seminary and we wonder whether they should teach at all. They would better be builders. So evaluate your gift, honestly and objectively and then accept it.

4. **Accepting** a gift is very important. The problem with most of us is that we don't accept. That's why Paul writes in Romans 12:3 that we should have a sober mind, not thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought to think. Suppose I think there is nothing that I cannot do, I'll be very foolish because there are some things where I'll make a mess. If I go to repair a car, I'll mess up that car and mess myself up. I know that I cannot do that. There are some other things which I know that I can do because God has given me the gift to do that. So I must think soberly, not to think too highly of myself, as though I am a great guy who can do everything.

Then I should not think too lowly of myself that is, 'I cannot do anything. Therefore I will not do anything.' You can do something. You have some gift of the Spirit God has given to you because you are His child. Accept it with a sober mind and use it. So we should be accepting of our gifts and not to be comparing ourselves with others, or looking at others and desiring their gifts. Accept what we have. To evaluate we must accept what we have.

5. **Expect confirmation** from the body of Christ and through the

Spirit. As you accept the gift that God has given you there will be confirmation. Others in the body will say, 'Brother you have the gift of teaching. Go ahead and use it. You have the gift of writing. Go ahead and use it.' Or they may say, 'you don't have that gift. Please don't do that.' So there is confirmation. Then comes the confirmation through the Spirit, the assurance.

There is one word of caution. Today there are some evangelical professionals who make much of this concept of fulfillment. There is a danger in that. Here is a medical doctor whom God has called to a remote mission field and he says, 'I don't find fulfillment here because I am not able to use my great training. I'm used to all those great facilities, and all that equipment. What am I doing here?' No when you say that you are making an idol of your training. You are also making an idol of your desire for fulfillment. That is not what we are talking about. This is a fulfillment which comes through the Holy Spirit. Sometimes even if you have to set aside your professional training and your higher education, doing something which God wants you to do, using your spiritual gifts there will be deep fulfillment, assurance. That is what I am talking about and that is also something which we should expect. So explore, experiment, evaluate and then expect confirmation.

6. **Commit to your Gift:** Once you have accepted your gift, discovered your gift, commit yourself to it. There are some of us who don't have that commitment. We want to be a jack of all trades, and then we end up doing nothing. There are many things that ought to be done, but you don't have to be doing everything. You find out what you are gifted for and what God wants you to do and concentrate on that. Commit yourself to do that.

Now I had to do it with some hard experiences, hard knocks. When I began my Christian ministry I thought I was to be preaching to big crowds as a crusade or campaign evangelist. The Lord told me, 'No, you are not that, you are a teacher.' So today I have completely died to numbers. Whether it is 6, or 60 or 6,000 it doesn't matter. Teaching-so it took me time and some hard knocks to accept that I'm to be using this gift and concentrate on that, I cannot be doing everything that needs to

be done. So when we have discovered our gifts we must commit ourselves to the use of those gifts. If you don't use, you may lose. You may not find that same sharpness and effectiveness. But on the other hand, as you use, enrichment comes to you, to the body of Christ and also your gift grows. Your gift develops. Did you know that? There is a development of a gift as you use it.

7. **Become by grace:** Sigmund Freud, the psychologist, said, that half of a child's personality is determined and fixed at the age of two. By the time, a child reaches four, his entire destiny is fixed. We don't have any chance, do we, after four? Unfortunately, Sigmund Freud is wrong. The Bible is right. What does the Bible say? The key word in the Bible is 'becoming.' As many as received Him, to them He gave the power and authority to become the children of God. Becoming-becoming by grace- I Praise God for that. With all the potential and gifts that He has given to me I become by grace, what naturally I cannot ever become.

Do you believe that? All of that is locked up in you. Young person, you can be so timid and so shy that your tongue sticks to the roof of your mouth when anyone asks you a question, or your knees shake when you are asked to pray. You want to go under the bench. But even you are a promise. There is potential in you. There are gifts in you. Accept them by faith and dedicate them to the Lord and He will release them for His use. As you use them for His glory, you will develop. You can become by grace what you never thought you would become. There are the wonderful possibilities of becoming by grace in the use of our gifts. May God help that we would accept this and help fulfill His mission.

III. Mission and Passion for the world

12. God's Programme for the Dying World

Psalm 87

God's response to human rebellion is the setting up of His Kingdom. When our Lord Jesus came into this world, He came announcing that Kingdom. He also proclaimed His mission, in Luke 4:18, 19, known as the Nazareth Manifesto. We often neglect one manifesto. In Matthew 16:18, our Lord asks His disciples, "Who do people say the Son of man is?" And then He asked them, "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Our Lord accepted this confession and then said, "I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it." The church was not built on Peter, but on Jesus the Rock.

The New Humanity

Jesus was here outlining His programme. God's missionary plan is not a New Testament discovery. It has been there right from the beginning of the Old Testament. The idea of the Kingdom community, a community which accepts God's kingly rule and is willing to be priests for Him, is central in God's programme. It is there right from the Old Testament. In Psalm 87 we read about a community, the New Humanity. What is the New Humanity? It is not a hotch-potch bundle of humanity who may belong to any faith and yet are interested in the welfare of humanity. This is how some people interpret the New Humanity. The Bible does not support this. The New Humanity is very clearly God's redeemed people. He sets His hope upon them and they are the ones who will reveal His glory and His redemptive purpose in this world. "By abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations his purpose was to create in Himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace," Ephesians 2:15.

The New Humanity is to be viewed in the light of the cross and resurrection which is the cutting edge. If so, immediately the whole of humanity is divided into two. There are those who accept and those who reject. God is interested in saving the whole of humanity.

put to say-whether they accept or reject salvation already provided them-that all will find themselves in is not right. That is blatant universalism. In the light of the cross and resurrection, there is a New humanity created. Those who accept the work of Jesus Christ on the cross and put their faith on it for their salvation pass from death to life. They constitute the New Man. It does not matter to what caste or race or language or culture they belong.

Psalm 87 is a beautiful picture of this. This is God's programme to build His Church, to create His New Humanity.

The constitution of the new humanity

The word Zion is used here. It is mentioned as though it is a place, a city. Zion is mentioned several times in the Old Testament. In some places it is identified with Jerusalem. Here it can also refer to a community. It is not so much the city but the occupants of the city who are important. When we talk about the Church we do not talk about the building but about the people, the community of God's people. The word Zion stands for the community of God's people. God Himself constitutes this community, New Humanity as part of His great programme.

1. God-created Community:

Ps 87:1 says "He has set his foundation on the holy mountain. Indeed, of Zion it will be said, 'This one and that one were born in her and the Most High himself will establish.'" The word "Most High" is the name used for God. Daniel was very fond of that name.

It is very interesting to study how different prophets used different names for God in their writings. Malachi's popular expression was the Lord of Hosts, which the NIV translates as the Almighty God. Malachi, speaking to an erring people, presented God as the Almighty. Ezekiel was in exile seeing the sufferings of his people who were in exile. He also saw their sins that led to their exile. He saw God as the Sovereign Lord. Daniel stood at the crossroads of history. He was in Babylon where he could survey the whole course of history. In his visions he saw the Medo-Persian Empire, the Greek empire, the Roman Empire, and the coming of the Messiah. To him God was the Most High God.

The Most High God is the God of history, supreme over nations. It is He who constituted His community. It is not manmade; no club which to join by subscribing. God Himself creates it. This is true of the Church. The born again are brought into the body of Christ and God Himself constitutes the Church.

If precious before God, the community is important to us in our Christian life and service. We should not neglect it/local churches. God is not merely in the process of saving individual souls, He is in the process of building His Church. If you have no concern for the Church, you will be out of God's will. There are two things you cannot do alone by yourself. One is getting married and the other is being a Christian. It takes any man and any god to make any religion. But it takes two men and Jesus Christ to make Christianity. John Wesley said "To turn Christianity into a solitary religion is to destroy it." God's purpose is not just to save individual souls but to build a Church. We may work in campuses and in colleges but we should not neglect the Church. It is central in God's purpose and programme.

We must take our place in the Church seriously. There is no place for spiritual tramps, there are no such beings as Christians at large. We always know of saints identified with some local church in some place in the Scripture. The word saint is used in the plural 61 times in the New Testament and only once is it used in the singular. The New Testament does not know of an individualist saint or an isolated saint. It speaks of saints living together, loving the Lord together, loving each other and serving Him.

2. God-Separated Community :

Psalms 87:1 says, "He has set His foundation on the holy mountain." The mountain speaks to us of a lofty place. Also it is called the holy mountain. The word "holy" in the Old Testament means separated or consecrated. So this community is a separated community, a consecrated community. But here we find a paradox. We are to be in the world and yet be separate from it.

There are some who say that we should merge with the world so that the clear contours of the Church are not visible. It is said

that the world provides the agenda for the Church. A word of caution - We do not derive our agenda from the world, but from the Head of the Church as we are the body. We do not merge with the world because we are called to be a separate people. The lines of distinction must be clearly visible. How we need to emphasize it these days! In values, goals and standards those who belong to God's redeemed community must be distinct from the world if they are to have an answer to this dying world. Jesus said in John 17:14, 16, "I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world..... They are not of the world, even as I am not of it."

Our Lord said twice "I am not of it" just to give us a lesson. How did He relate to the world? He was not of the world and yet He lived in it. He did not live on a tree top. In the middle Ages there were saints in isolation. They put up their little huts on tree tops and there they lived. Everything was brought to them there and they never came down. The higher the pillar the holier they thought they were. These were saints in isolation. It is not to be so. *We are saints in circulation.* We are among the people of the world just as Jesus was. Yet he was different from the world. That is the quality of separation.

3. **God-Loved Community:**

Psalm 87:2 says, "The Lord loved the Gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob." Why did He create this community? It is purely because of His love that He chose them. This is election love. We read in Deuteronomy 7:7, 8, "The Lord did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples for you were the fewest of all peoples. But it was because the Lord loved you and kept the oath He swore to your fathers that He brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh King of Egypt." Because He loves them, He also lives among them. The idea of God among His People is very important in missions. Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives among His people? Do we recognize this as a factor in missions? In some of our mission fields we find a small group of believers

amidst spiritual darkness. These men and women are redeemed from demon possession, sorcery, witchcraft, immorality and drunkenness. Now they are meeting together for worship and Christ is present among them. That is a great challenge to the powers of darkness around. If a church is planted in a dark corner of the world and if God's Spirit dwells among them, what a challenge it is to Satan!

Because God loves His people, He also purifies them. That is why we should not abandon the community of God's people. If we look at some of them, we may lose hope. There is strife, litigation, backsliding and carnality among them. Yet this community is not forsaken by the Lord of the Church. In Ephesians 5:25, 26 Paul writes, "Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless." He loves and will purify the Church. We should not write off any denomination or any church.

II. The composition of the new humanity: (87:4-6):

Who are the people in the New Humanity? The psalmist mentions Zion as God's people. The people of Israel were in covenant relationship with Him. The Scriptures clearly say that not all those who name themselves as Israelites belong to this community. They must have faith and, by accepting the covenant seal of circumcision, they must become the covenant community.

He also says in v.4 "I will record Rahab and Babylon among those who acknowledge me-Philistia too, and Tyre along with Cush." The name Rahab is given to Egypt in Scripture, Isaiah 30:7. **Egypt and Babylon** are included among those who acknowledge Him. He does not include those nations just as they are but they must acknowledge Him. Those who know Him, receive Him, and accept His rule are the ones who acknowledge Him. So from Rahab and Babylon those who have acknowledged and have believed in Him are included.

In Isaiah 19:23-25 we read, "In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria. The Egyptians and Assyrians will worship together. In that day Israel will be the third, along with Egypt and

Assyria, a blessing on the earth. The Lord Almighty will bless them, saying 'Blessed be Egypt my people, Assyria my handiwork and Israel my inheritance.' Should we not pray for the salvation of Egypt and Assyria? Egypt and Babylon were both nations which hated Israel. Yet they will be included in the Community of God's people. This shows that we cannot write off any group of people. Just because they have a political system different from ours or they are politically hostile to our nation, we cannot write them off. Let us be careful that our missionary thinking is not molded by political consideration and racial prejudices or influenced by the media. God should mould our thinking. He has His people everywhere.

Then in v. 4 we see Philistia. Even in David's time they were subdued but not wiped out. They were a thorn to Israel constantly. Yet they will be included. If we are prejudiced culturally and linguistically against any group of people, we must ask God to deal with it because we will be a hindrance to His missionary purpose. There is no place for regionalism, lingualism and casteism in God's missionary purpose. As Dr. Stanley Jones said, every one of us has a herd instinct. This herd instinct makes us say in the words of Rudyard Kipling, "All the folks like us are we and the rest of them are they." That instinct must be dealt with and then we become available for God's missionary programme involving people from all nations, all tribes and all languages.

And then He talks of Tyre. Tyre along with Sidon was known for its commerce, wealth and sophistication. It is sometimes easy to believe that the tribal people will come to Christ. But when we meet sophisticated, arrogant, aristocratic people, we have no faith to win them. Whoever they are, no one is impossible for God.

Then Cush is mentioned. Cush stands for the upper Nile region in North Africa. That may include Sudan and Ethiopia and the black people. In the New Humanity there is no difference in terms of political power or wealth or colour. All have a place in it. What a glorious hope for this divided sin-sick world! What a hope to our country torn asunder in many ways!

In God's community every barrier is broken down. God's people are one. Paul was excited when he wrote about it. In Ephesians 2:14, 15 he writes, "For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in His flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace." After the Meenakshipuram incident about the conversion of Harijans to Islam, a question was asked in the legislative assembly in Tamilnadu, "Why didn't they go into the Christian Church?" One MLA said, "Because there is caste in the Christian church also," What a poor testimony!

God is today building His Church, a community where all these barriers are broken down. People from all over the world belonging to different languages and races are brought into the Church. In **Central America**, where there are many situations of violence and restlessness, the Church is growing fast. In El Salvador the Church grows at the rate of forty five thousand people a year. Guatemala has the largest rate of church growth: 12.6%. In Africa, 16,000-17,000 a day are being added to the church. There are 15,000 missionaries from the non-Western world, from Africa, Asia and Latin America reaching out to others. A great band of God's people are reaching out and the church is being planted in places where it was never known before. God is gathering His people without any racial, linguistic, color or caste differences into His New Humanity.

We note two things about this New Humanity. First, they must acknowledge Him, they must know Him v.4. Second, "The Lord will write in the register of the peoples: This one was born in Zion, v.6. These words are a little difficult to understand. Look at the end of v.4. God looked at all these nations and said, "I will say this one was born in Zion." "Indeed, of Zion it will be said, "This one and that one were born in her', v.5. In v.6 we read, "This one was born in Zion." What does this mean? In the New English Bible v.5 is translated, "And Zion shall be called a mother, in whom men of every race are born." The New English Bible got the word 'mother' from the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament. Zion shall be called mother. This community of God's people is the mother in whom men of every

race are born. How did they become part of Zion? They must know God and then God acts. He writes the name in the register.

This idea of the register is scriptural. It is found in several Old Testament passages. In Jeremiah 22:30 we read, "This is what the Lord says, "Record this man as if childless, a man who will not prosper in his lifetime." So God was maintaining a record to write the names of these people. Ezekiel 13:9 says, "My hand will be against the prophets who see false visions and utter lying divination. They will not belong to the council of my people or be listed in the house of Israel where false prophets will not be listed." Jesus said "Do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." Luke 10:20. So the idea of the register is here in the Scripture. It speaks about God's sovereign act. God acts, it is not man's effort. He includes people from other nations in that register. That is how they become a part of His community. They are grafted.

Apostle Paul derived his missionary vision from these great Old Testament passages. In Romans 11:17, 18 he writes, "If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, do not boast over those branches. If you do consider this, you do not support the root but the root supports you." "After all, you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree." They are recorded in the register. That is God's work. Should it not give us a great missionary passion? On that final Day when people from every tongue and tribe and culture will stand around the Throne, when that register would be completed and that grafting done, will there be people from every group in the world? Will there be people from every group in **India**? Yes! But now there are yet some tribes and some groups among whom still there is no church. They have not heard the Gospel.

It is amazing to see how God transforms communities. In 1833 Charles Darwin was visiting **South Sea Islands** and he saw the cannibals there and thought that he had found the missing link. He thought no other people could be more primitive and more

backward than they. He returned thirty four years later to the same place. By that time John Paton from Scotland had worked in those places as a missionary. There were many schools, hospitals and churches and those cannibals were now educated, lovely Christians. They were no more lusting for blood but longing for fellowship. Charles Darwin could not believe his eyes. Do you know what he did? He made a contribution to the London Missionary Society.

III. The confession of the humanity (87:7)

What is our confession? As they make music, this glorious composition of the New Humanity becomes a singing group. Do you know that in some religions they do not know how to sing or what to sing? But those who come into the Christian faith become a singing people. What a joy it is sometimes to see people from Muslim background come into our churches and become a part of God's community and sing for His glory. The tribals who have only mourning songs come in and sing for the glory of God. The New Humanity sings, "All my fountains are in you." The words 'in you' may refer to the Lord or to Zion. "All my springs are in you or all my sources are in you." We are reminded of Psalm 46:4 where the river of God flows from the city of God. In Ezekiel 47 the living stream flowed from the threshold of the temple bringing life and healing wherever it went. What a picture! Our springs are in the people of God and in God Himself.

Our sources and springs are transformed and cleansed. We preach the Gospel in the context of the culture. But the Gospel cleanses the culture. Every culture, western or non-western, is tainted with sin. There is no such thing as Christian culture anywhere in the world today. It is all tainted with sin and must be brought under the judgment of God. The Word of God must cleanse it. We must accept those things in the culture which can be accepted and change those which have to be changed. As we are drawn into this New Humanity, our cultures are transformed and enriched and not destroyed.

Missions enriches Culture

Secular, anti-missionary anthropologists say that missions destroy

culture. We refute it. On the other hand, the **Gospel enriches culture**. Mission enriches culture, if it is carried on in the right way. Revelation 21:24-26 says of Zion, "The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut for there will be no night there. The glory and honour of the nations will be brought into it. Nothing impure will ever enter it." We see that the New Humanity also separates. It is not an all-embracing conglomeration of humanity. "Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Revelation 21:27). Kings will bring their glory into it and nations, their glory and honour. The glory of the nations is their culture, their background and all they have inherited. Enriched by the cleansing power of the Gospel, they will be brought into the New Humanity.

13. God's Person for the Dying World

Psalm 40

Psalm 40 shows God has a plan for the dying world. He has set up His King. God has made His provision and has His programme through His church. It calls for a personal response from each one of us. Psalm 40 teaches us what kind of a person God wants for His use in this dying world. Here in Psalm 40 the psalmist opens his heart and tells us of his experiences and how he responded to the Lord. It is very personal. The pronouns 'I' and 'my' occur many times in this Psalm born out of the personal experience of the psalmist. There are three main divisions in the Psalm-A New Song, A Noble Surrender, A Notable Secret.

I. A new song (40:1-5):

The psalmist says, "He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise for God. Many will see and hear and put their trust in the Lord," v.3. He calls it a new song, because the song was born out of his first experience. It may be an old hymn, but when it comes to you afresh and you sing it out of your fresh obedience to Jesus Christ, then it becomes a new song. So it need not be a newly composed song. The psalmist's song was new because it was fresh.

1. His desolation (40:1-2):

i. Conflict:

What is the background in which he was singing this new song? It was a background of desolation. He describes his desolation, vv.1, 2. He says, "I waited patiently for the Lord, he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire" v.1. First, 'the slimy pit'- KJV translates it as 'the horrible pit': RSV as 'the desolate pit'. The margin of KJV says 'the pit of noise' and the margin RV says 'the pit of tumult'. There is a picture of turbulence, restlessness, tumult and noise. It is out of this that God lifted him up. When a person turns from God and lives in rebellion, there is restlessness and tumult. It is interesting to note 'the pit of noise'. Our generation is a noisy and noise-loving generation, unable to bear stillness. This is

probably a song of the rebellion and restlessness of our age. Some people are afraid to be alone. In a gathering like this a person can be very lonely. But if he is alone by himself, he cannot bear it. He cannot bear to be with people, nor can he bear to be alone. What a paradox! It is because he is in rebellion against God. God can deliver you from such a situation.

ii. Corruption:

Notice the second expression, "out of the mud and mire." This is described as 'the miry bog' in RSV. It speaks of a helpless situation. We cannot lift ourselves up. The harder we try to come out, the deeper we sink. To change the metaphor, it is like a man trying to sweep a dusty room. When he sweeps the dust goes up and then it settles down. The experiences of some people are like that. Conferences stir up a lot of dust and soon it settles down. There is a character in Peanut comics called Pig Pen. He is notoriously dirty and it is said that the dust of the ages is upon him and when he passes by, history is passing by. One day he told Charlie Brown that he had a bath. It was unusual. Charlie Brown said, "Well, you must be clean then." Pig Pen replied, "I don't know about that, at least it settled the dust." In some lives, conferences just settle the dust.

The psalmist describes a situation where the dirt clings to the person in two ways, v.1. One is restlessness and the other is a clinging defilement. It is a picture of sin. Was it David's sin or some other desperate situation which the psalmist is talking about here? It is certainly a clinging situation which does not let him go free. He is helpless and restless. There was conflict and corruption.

2. His deliverance:

i. God's Grace:

From this situation God delivered him. We now look at the psalmist's deliverance. He says, "The Lord turned to me and heard my cry," v.1 and, "He lifted me out of the slimy pit....he set my feet on a rock," v.2. Notice all these action verbs, he 'turned to me...heard my cry...lifted me out...set my feet...gave me a firm place.' All this is of God. In this deliverance

the psalmist did nothing. He cried unto the Lord who did everything. That is God's grace, unmerited favour. How is this grace manifested?

First, He heard. The psalmist says, "He turned to me and heard my cry." NEB translates, "He bent down to me." Another translation says, "He turned and listened to my cry." God's attention was drawn. When Jesus passed by Jericho, blind Bartimaeus cried out to Him and Jesus stood. He stopped and listened to Bartimaeus. In the same way, when the psalmist cried out of the pit, God stopped to listen.

In New Guinea, Bible translators were translating this psalm. They wanted an apt expression for "He turned to me and heard my cry." One day the translator was visiting a hut. An old man had his little son in his knees and the son was trying to say something to the father. The father leaned towards him so that his ear was close to the son. The translator thought this was his moment. So he asked the man "What did you do just now? Tell me in your own language." The man replied, "I have spread my ear like a blanket." So they translated it like that. "God spread His ear like a blanket to hear my cry." He does not want to miss anything and so He is spreading His ear like a blanket. This is what grace does. God delivered. He lifted me out of the slimy pit," v.2. In this deliverance there is an upward pull. When you lift a man out of the pit, it is an upward pull - a change for the better. God's deliverance is always a change for the better.

Then God Secured. "He set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth," vv. 2, 3. God does not save us and then leave us to ourselves. There is a security. He puts our feet on a firm rock. We do not have to slide back. It is not like being in the clay anymore. In the clay we keep slipping. But there our feet are on firm rock. He gives us new principles, new power, and new purpose so that we walk in a new direction. There is a complete change of life in which there is security. All this is the work of God's grace.

ii. God's gifts

God's grace leads to God's gifts. What is God's gift to us? When He delivers us and puts us on a solid rock, He gives us a new

song. V.3. "He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and hear and put their trust in the Lord." Did you notice here the psalmist's great concern? He is concerned that his deliverance should lead to the deliverance of others. We find this in Psalm 51 also. He prays for restoration up to v 12 and then says, "If you deliver me and give me a new song, others will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord," v.3. A new song leads to a new influence. C T Studd said to a woman, "*Salvation is like small pox. If you have it, you will give it to others.*" She was a bit offended at that. Later Studd received a telegram saying, "Having a bad case of small pox."

God's gifts include a new life: "Blessed is the man who makes the Lord His trust, who does not look to the proud, to those who turn aside to false gods," v.4. The new life is characterized by two things like the two sides of a coin. **On one side this new life is characterized by renunciation and on the other by reliance.** What is renunciation? The man who is delivered does not look to the proud or put his confidence in them. One expositor said that the word 'proud' here is used as a nickname for Egypt in Isaiah 30:7. The people of Israel always turned to Egypt in times of need. They depended on Egypt. We must renounce our dependence on other things and people. We must renounce our dependence on false gods and vain things that take the place of God. That is renunciation.

Then there must be **reliance**. "Blessed is the man who makes the Lord his trust," v.5. This is a new lifestyle, one of utter dependence on the Lord. In this lifestyle there are new values, because we renounce false ones. We have new values, new standards and new priorities. We renounce our dependence on the proud and depend on the Lord with new values, new priorities, and new goals because He has delivered us, given us a new song and a new influence.

In v.5 we see the new confidence that the psalmist had. "Many, O Lord my God, are the wonders you have done. The things you planned for us no one can recount to you; were I to speak and tell of them, they would be too many to declare." The psalmist speaks of a past in which God had done wonders. Then he

speaks of a future which God has planned. In the new life he rejoiced in the wonders of the past, the miracles that God has done for him. Do you believe that God plans for you? Some people say, "I'm afraid of making decisions lest I make mistakes. I'm afraid I may miss God's will." You don't have to be afraid that you will miss God's will."

God is keener to reveal His will to you than you are to find it out. He plans for you. Psalm 138:8 says, "The Lord will fulfill His purpose for me; your love, O Lord, endures forever." KJV says, "The Lord will perfect that which concerns me." The Lord will fulfill His purpose for you. Zephaniah 3:17 says, "The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with His love, he will rejoice over you with singing." Look at the sentence, "He will quiet you with His love." One rendering of that statement says, "He will silently plan for you in love." This is what we find in the new life. Our confidence is that God plans for us. He who has done wonders in the past will not forsake us now and He plans our tomorrow. When our past and future are all taken care of, why worry?

II. Noble surrender (40:6-10):

1. He listens to God:

In return for God's deliverance and the hope He gives us, we must surrender ourselves to Him. V.6 says, "Sacrifice and offering and sin offerings you did not require." What does the psalmist mean when he says, "My ears you have pierced?" NIV margin says, "My ears you have opened." It can mean, "I have an open ear, I will listen to you." Listening is part of surrender. The problem with us is listening seems to be the hardest because we are great talkers. This is true in our human relationships and we carry it over to our relationship with God. We are not willing to spend time with Him and listen to Him. Dr. Stanley Jones used to set apart time every morning for what he called the listening post. We must have a listening post where we sit quietly before God with His Word. It is not passive waiting.

The Moral Rearmament movement (MRA) emphasizes that we

sit quietly with a notebook each morning, listen and write down all the thoughts that come to us. That is not what I mean. This quiet time is not transcendental meditation; it is not the quietness of Moral Rearmament. It is an attitude of expectation and faith in which we look to God, not into empty space, expecting Him to speak to us through His Word and His Spirit. When we listen like that we hear God speak. Isaiah 50:4 says, "The sovereign Lord has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught." Here the Lord's Servant says, God wakens me morning by morning and I listen to Him.

2. He surrenders to God:

Surrender includes servant-hood. This is very crucial in our missionary commitment. One is servant hood and the other is suffering. Servant-hood is expressed by listening in submission. Our Lord says in Matthew 11:29 "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." As we take His yoke and listen to Him, we learn. Secondly, this expression "My ears you have opened" also has an Old Testament background. In Exodus 21:1-5 we find that a slave who did not want to go free at the end of seven years could go to his master and say, "I don't want to leave you." The master would take him to the door post and put his ear against it and make a hole in the ear with a sharp needle. Thus his ear was pierced. When the ear was opened or pierced, the man became a love slave for a lifetime. So the psalmist was saying to God, "I will be your love slave for ever."

Nowadays there is a lot of talk about short term missionary service. We want to try out various types of work. There may be short term service but there must be long term commitment. There is no such thing as short term commitment to God's will. Our commitment is not to a place or a work but to Him. He can lead us from one work to another or from one place to another. C T Studd was a missionary to China. When he was a student in Cambridge University, he talked and dreamed about China. But

when he went to China, he was there only for ten years. He came to India and was in the Nilgiris for seven years. Then he went to Africa for 18 years and did his life work there. We cannot boast about our place of work or about our work. Our commitment is ultimately to our Lord. He can take us anywhere and to any work. But that commitment to the Lord is a lifetime commitment.

There can be no Christian service without servant-hood.

Service without servant-hood is the curse of our land. Everybody talks of service but the unique thing about Christian faith is that there is no service without servant hood. When we talk about servant hood, it is not the hired employee but the lifetime love slave we are talking about. The slave has no rights. The slave is described in Luke 17 by our Lord. He said in Luke 17:9, 10, "Would He (the master) thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, "We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty." Can you imagine that? The man comes after working all day in the field and the master says, "You prepare my food." And when he has prepared his food, the master sits and eats while the servant just stands and watches. Then after he has finished eating, the master washes his hands, wipes his mouth and does not even say, "Thank you." Our Lord used this parable to point out to us that we should expect no reward and we have no right when we serve Him.

The popularity or convenience and comfort that come to us in our service should not possess us. If we get them, we will regard them as from the Lord. We should not seek after them. That is the attitude Paul had. He knew how to be full and how to be empty. He knew how to be poor and how to be rich. When we say "These are my qualifications, give me a job to suit them," we are wrong. Jesus Christ is not running an employment exchange. He is Lord. The terms are that we be slaves without any demands and any right.

1. A surrendered man delights to do God's will.

"Then I said, 'Here I am. I have come - It is written about me in the scroll. I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.' Each one of us should place ourselves on the altar and say, 'Lord, I will be your lifetime love slave and I will do your will.'"

ii. Notable secret (40:11-17):

When we have given our all to Jesus Christ, what happens? Does anybody lay the red carpet for us and say, "Here comes the man who has surrendered his all. Let's applaud him, garland him, and pave the way for him so that he can do God's will?" No! You may face opposition from church leaders and even mature believers who may not understand your enthusiasm. They may come out with suggestions which dampen you. There will be violent opposition from Satan and those whom he uses. That is the psalmist's situation.

1. His situation (40:12, 14-15)

i. The Presence of evil:

In v.12 he says, "Troubles without number surround me: my sins have overtaken me, and I cannot see. They are more than the hairs of my head, and my heart fails within me." He talks about sins and troubles. The troubles are the result of the sins. What sins is he talking about? Sometimes our sins are forgiven but we bear the consequences on our body and the scars are still there. The sin is forgiven, it is not held against us and it will never be a handicap. Suppose you have constantly read filthy literature. It leaves a mark on your mind so that you are bothered with unclean thoughts and imaginations even after being forgiven. If you have been a drunkard, your liver is affected and you bear that scar even though forgiven and restored.

There are some consequences that continue and God uses them for chastening us and keeping us constantly dependent on Him. It may be those sins that the psalmist is talking about. Or it may be that even after his restoration, he finds sin as a present reality. In Romans 7:24 Paul said,

“What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?” This is the presence of sin around us pulling us down always. Just because you made a glorious commitment in the missionary convention, sin is not going to leave you, nor is Satan. The temptation to lust, uncleanness and worldliness may still be there.

ii. The presence of enemies (4:14, 15)

Secondly he says in vv.14 and 15, “May all who seek to take my life be put to shame and confusion; may all who desire my ruin be turned back into disgrace. May those who say to me 'Aha Aha' be appalled at their own shame.” He is talking here about enemies who oppose God's will. They do not want God's Kingdom to flourish. In the dying world there are dying men who cannot stand the symptoms of life. These men will oppose you when you go as a messenger of life. Death will constantly be waging a battle against life. We have to face it. There is sin around and there are enemies around.

2. His strength (40:11, 13, 17):

In the midst of this situation, what is the psalmist's notable secret? Where do we find his strength? He says, “Be pleased, O Lord to save me. O Lord, come quickly to help me,” v.13. He called on the Lord. Don't look at your situation, look to the Lord. A dirty little boy had fallen into the gutter and climbed out with all the gutter water dripping from him. He saw a clean looking gentleman dressed in white in the street and challenged him to a fight. If that man were to wrestle with that boy, all the dirt on the boy will cling to the man. We should not fight evil with our strength. If we do so, the defilement will cling to us. Don't even pray about certain temptations because the more you pray the stronger they stick on your mind. Look to the Lord in an attitude of faith. Say to Him, “Lord, you answer the door. That dirty little thing is knocking at the door, you go and face it.” The psalmist cried to the Lord.

Secondly, he cast himself on the steadfast love and faithfulness of the Lord. “Do not withhold your mercy from me, O Lord; may

your love and your truth always protect me," v.11. Another translation says, "Steadfast love and faithfulness." These are the two things we most hold on to, the Lord's steadfast love which never lets us go and His faithfulness which never breaks down.

Then he confesses his confidence in the Lord. He says in vv.16 and 17, "May all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you; may those who love your salvation always say 'The Lord be exalted.' Yet I am poor and needy; may the Lord think of me. You are my help and my deliverer; O my God, do not delay." If we had to pray in that situation we might have put v.17 ahead of v.16. That is not the order. The first is, "May the Lord be exalted" and then our need. We should not put ourselves first and become wrapped up in our own problems and hurts. Some of us waste much time shedding tears for ourselves. Then there are no more tears to shed for others. Let us not get preoccupied with our own problems. Let us look to Jesus and pray that He will be glorified.

Then the psalmist confesses his weakness and utter helplessness, "I am poor and needy." He places his complete confidence in the Lord. He says, "May the Lord think of me. You are my help and my deliverer," v.17. That is the secret of his strength.

14. God's Plan for the Dying World

Taken from book: 'Risen Lord for a Dying World.' From UESI.

As I prayed and waited on the Lord I was led to the Book of Psalms for our studies.

It is amazing how much about mission you can find in Psalms. I am thrilled whenever I read the Book of Psalms and preach from it because I see here God's glory and majesty. That should be the basis for mission and that is what mission is all about. Ultimately it results in God's glory. It is not the planting of the Church that is the goal of mission, but that through the planting of the Church ultimate worship and glory be given to God. May God deliver us from mere humanism in mission. We find this God-centredness shining through the Psalms. With this introduction let us turn to Psalm 2.

I. Human rebellion (2:1-3):

Psalm 2 describes a situation that is very familiar to us. It can be contextualized at any time in history. Men and women living at any time in history have always felt that theirs was the worst time of history. It will be amazing to know that our grandfathers felt that things were at their worst then! Our fathers said that, and we say that today. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, the psalmist looked around and described situations of his day. His world was a dying world. So is ours. We live in traumatic times with so much violence. What does this indicate? There is death with so much violence. What does this indicate? There is death in culture and civilization. One word portrays the situation and that is 'rebellion'! The psalmist pictures it in the first three verses.

How was this rebellion manifested? Look at v. 1. "Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?" It appears as though it is a question, but it is rather a statement of amazement. The Living Bible brings it out. The nations rage without purpose. Notice 'peoples' indicating groups of people. What is the situation portrayed here? There is restlessness and rebellion among the various groupings of people around the world. The word 'rage' is a very interesting word. It is used to describe the restless waves of the sea or to describe a horse that is tied and is stamping the ground-restless, ready to go.

the peoples of the world are restless and they do not want to be bound in any way.

1. **A manifestation of this rebellion is arrogance**, v.2 "The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against His anointed one". They plot and they gather together, they are opposed to the Lord and His Anointed. "Taking the stand and gathering together against the Lord" indicates pride and arrogance. Who were the arrogant ones here- The rulers, those in leadership and kings of the earth. Certainly we do not live under monarchy in many places. So how does this apply to us? It refers to those in positions of leadership. It may be political or government leaders or men and women who mold the thinking of others.

Take for instance the influence the movies have and we have moved into an era of movie star politics in our country. Even today Pop music stars hold sway over the minds and hearts of young people. The leaders are not necessarily kings with crowns. They are arrogant. What a picture of our world! It is considered popular to talk against God and to magnify humanism, a philosophy that has no place for God. These leaders have completely removed God from their thinking and have put themselves at its centre.

2. **The second sign of rebellion is antagonism**, v.2 "The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against the anointed one." This Psalm had an immediate application. It referred to the coronation of a king, probably Solomon's. It has also an ultimate application speaking about the Messiah, Christ. The antagonism is directed towards Jehovah (the Lord) and Christ. We cannot call our world irreligious or non-religious. The majority of the people in the world today are religious, following one religion or the other. Islam holds sway over nearly one fifth of the world's population.

So the people of the world are not against God, but they are against the true God. They are not against any god; they are against the Lord Jehovah, the revealed God of the Bible. Have you heard people say in this country, "Talk about religion and about God - we'll listen? But why talk about Jehovah and about Christ?" So the danger today is to compromise. That is why we

find the infiltration of syncretistic ideas. Human rebellion manifests itself even through religious forms. There may be religion-but no acceptance of the revelation.

3. **We find the third sign of this rebellion** in v.3. What do these rulers and kings say? What do these men and women of influence say? They say, "Let us break their chains and throw off their fetters". The word "their" refers to the Lord and His anointed one. They were saying, "Let us break the chains of Jehovah and Christ." This is anarchy, the tendency to reject God's moral law and to live as we please. They called the 1970s the Me decade and we have not got out of that decade yet. We are still in the Me generation.

A young lady went to her pastor because her marriage was in trouble. She had two teenage children. She wanted to break up the marriage. The pastor had counseled the husband and he seemed pliable and willing to obey. But when he talked to her, she said, looking at him straight in the face, "Look here pastor, how long am I going to live only for my children and my husband? All these years I have lived for them. When am I going to live my own life? I have decided that I'll do my own thing, I'll live my own life." So saying, she stormed out of the pastor's office. If you follow that philosophy, you are headed for disaster.

It is in obeying God's laws that we find freedom. God made the fish and put it in the water as if He said to it, "As long as you live in the water you will be perfectly free and happy". But suppose that fish argues, "Why should I be confined to this water? The dog runs on land and the birds fly in the air" and comes out of the water, it will be the most stupid fish on earth. It will die. As long as it stays in the water it realizes its fish-hood and in so doing it finds perfect happiness and freedom. Man made in the image of God will realize his humanness only as he is true to that image and obeys God who has created him and given him a moral and spiritual nature. When any person breaks those laws and says, "I'll live my own life, I don't care for God", he is going contrary to his own nature and he is on the path of collision.

There is a lot of freedom and free expression advocated nowadays. In a seminar on family life, a lady stood up and said, "I don't believe in putting restrictions on my children. They must give expression to their desires and must have freedom. I don't restrict

magazine coming into this house and I don't restrict them from reading any books." She did not realize that before giving them freedom, she should have taught them how to choose. Freedom without responsibility is foolishness.

divine response (2:4-6):

What is the divine response to this human rebellion? We find it in vv. 4

He laughs. The One enthroned in heaven laughs. Above the raging, restless mass of humanity there is One who is sovereign. God who is sovereign ruling over the affairs of man laughs. God laughs when men and women exalt themselves against Him. God must have had a good laugh when Hitler and Idi Amin were riding high. They came and went but God rules on. That is our confidence. God laughs because He is confident. He is almighty and authoritative, self-possessed, self-sufficient, and self-existent. Nothing can disturb Him.

God also derides. "The Lord scoffs at them, v. 4. It is not a heartless mockery, but it is from a heart that is full of pain. Later we find in this Psalm the true heart of God as He looks at this rebellious mass of humanity. He is concerned. Often we look at the opposition, violence and hostility and become cynical. One of the hindrances in mission is cynicism and pessimism. I am optimistic not because there is anything to be optimistic about in myself or in our resources or in what we are accomplishing, but we are optimistic because of our sovereign God. We look at the world from His perspective. Let our perspective be molded by Him and let us see our land as well as the whole world as He sees it.

He rebukes them in His anger. God speaks! Isn't that marvelous? We do not have a silent, detached deity, living in eternal bliss, looking down at the mass of suffering humanity saying, "You deserve it"! This is a God whose heart is broken when human beings suffer. He is involved. He speaks! He is the God of history, involved in the affairs of history. He speaks through His Word and through His servants. When men and women do not listen to Him, He begins to speak through circumstances. But there is mercy even in that judgment because it is for our chastening; He is trying to draw us back into

His will.

4. **He sets up His King**, v.6. "I have installed my King on Zion my holy hill." It is through the King and the Kingdom community that God offers hope to a dying world. The Kingdom community is the church, God's people. And the King is Jesus Christ, the Risen Lord. So when God looks at the raging mass of humanity - rebellious, restless, antagonistic, and given over to anarchy, His solution is in His King and in His Kingdom community. Isn't it amazing that God's hope for this land rests on His people in this land? We may be full of failures, divisions and strife. Yet we are His Kingdom community, His people in whom there is hope. The word "set" or "installed" is a very special word. It speaks about the installation of a king.

III. Christ's rule (27-12):

God has set Christ, the Messiah, as His King on Zion, His holy hill.

1. This may seem insignificant to the world. On that same day when the French rebels were storming the Bastille prison to start the French Revolution, cobbler William Carey set sail for India as missionary with his wife who was not in sound mental health. In sailing for India, I was reading recently that the Times published in London reported on the French Revolution. But I do not think that the Times reported on William Carey. But then, which had turned to be the most significant event in history - the coming of William Carey to India or the storming of the Bastille by the French rebels?
2. There is also another incident in history. Philippi was the scene of a great battle between Brutus and Cassius on one side and Mark Antony and Augustus Caesar on the other. Brutus and Cassius were defeated. After Philippi became the first Roman colony, they set up a big monument for Brutus and a great celebration for the victory of Augustus. In Acts 16 we read that a group of three men landed in Philippi. They did not have a big mass meeting, an evangelistic campaign or a healing campaign. They went to the riverside and met with a group of women. One among them opened her heart and her home to them. That was Lydia. And in history this turned out to be the most significant event and not the victory of Mark Antony and

Augustus Caesar. Young people, if you want to make history, join the band of Jesus Christ. The King is set up, the Kingdom is marching on. That is God's answer to this world's problems.

3. Lastly we find Christ's rule mentioned in vv.7-12. These words are spoken by the Messiah himself. "I will proclaim the decree of the Lord". He says, "I'll tell you what the Lord decreed on that day. He said to me, "you are my son, today I have become your father." The NIV margin says, "You are my son. Today I have begotten you." The word "begotten" speaks about a unique relationship between the Son and the Father, between the anointed One and the Lord, Jehovah. Christ has a unique relationship with the Father, an unoriginated, eternal relationship. This unique relationship was not established just at that time. At that point in time He was declaring. "You are my Son in a unique relationship; you are a unique Person, both divine and human." So this King who is set on the throne is a unique Person. He is God - Man. He is the answer to this dying world.

i. V.8 not only speaks about His unique Person, but speaks about His universal authority: "Ask of me and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession." Notice the expressions "the ends of the earth" and "nations" do not merely mean non-Jewish nations, but various ethnic groups. God sees this entire universe as a beautiful mosaic, made of many people groups, cultural groups, ethnic groups, linguistic groups and tribal groups, but certainly not caste groups. I do not believe caste is God-ordained or God-intended, because it is sinful and has to be rejected. I do not think any missiological concept should include it as a relevant factor. We find here God promising to the Messiah these ethnic groups.

Matthew 28:18 onwards we read, "Jesus came to them and said, all authority in heaven and on earth is given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." He says because all authority is given to Him we must go and make disciples. Here the father says, 'You are my Son, you stand in a unique relationship to me and you are a unique person and I have set you up as King. Ask of me now and I

shall give the nations for your inheritance, the ends of the earth for your possession."

- ii. He talks about inheritance and possession in v.8. In v.9 He talks about His administration. He has inherited the nations and they must be possessed now for Him and then He will administer to them. What do we note about **His administration and His ultimate victory**? "You will rule them with an iron scepter." This thought is also found in Revelation 2:26, 27. "To him who overcomes and does my will to the end I will give authority over the nations." Notice clearly, "To the one who does His will." God wants today those who will give themselves totally to do His will. If we submit to His will, then He will give authority over the nations just as Christ received authority from His father. The very authority He had received, (Psalm 2:9), He is giving now to the one who is doing His will. Tremendous authority is placed in the hands of those who are involved in God's missionary purpose.
- iii. Then look at Revelation 12:5. "She gave birth to a son, a male child who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter." It refers to Christ the Messiah. Revelation 19:15 reads, "Out of His mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron scepter." The word iron rod actually stands for a shepherd's rod. It is a crooked rod. A shepherd uses it to guide His flock and to pull them back when they go astray. He also uses it to attack the marauders and other animals that come to attack. It is used for leading and guiding. It has nothing to do with breaking or destroying, but if they resist and rebel, then He will dash them into pieces like pottery. So the same rod which rules, guides and leads can also become the rod of judgment. This is His authority.

IV. Let your will be convinced:

Then we notice the last section. V.10 uses the conjunction "therefore." Over the restless, rebellious humanity full of arrogance, antagonism and anarchy God has all authority. He has set up His King, a unique person who has universal authority and will have ultimate victory. Because the Risen Lord is marching to victory and He has the

final say, three things are mentioned in vv. 10-12, summed up by one word. It is the word commitment. Here is a call for commitment. Commitment involves our mind, emotions and will. First our mind must be convinced (v.10), "Therefore you kings be wise, be warned." Those two words remind us of the Wisdom Literature. The greatest wisdom is to do God's will and the greatest folly is to do our own.

Let your will be committed v.11. "Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling." The first one is to serve the Lord with fear. When the will is committed, it results in service and the fear of God. It is not an abject fear but a filial fear, a fear that a son has for the father. Out of love and reverence, we must serve our Lord because our wills are submitted to Him. The expression "rejoice with trembling" has led to various translations. It can be translated as "live in trembling." Serve Him with fear and live in trembling. Walk as your God lives and is on the throne; walk with a great sense of awe and reverence. The greatest need in the Church in India today is to have the fear of God. May we live in this land of many gods and religions with the fear of God.

V. Let your emotions be consecrated:

V.12 Says, "Kiss the Son". In the RSV it is "Kiss His feet" and NEB margin says "Kiss the Mighty One". But the Hebrew word which is translated as the Son can also be translated as "purity, sincerity." Because the definite article "the" is not in the Hebrew, it is translated literally as "Kiss Son" which is a very awkward translation. Moreover, the meaning of the word BAR is Son only in Aramaic and not in Hebrew. So some expositors suggest, "Kiss sincerely," "kiss with a pure motive" or "give to Him your homage with sincerity." This talks about a public confession and acclamation of our love for Jesus is necessary. In the midst of the arrogance, anarchy and antagonism that we see in the world, we must publicly declare our love for Jesus. Let your mind be convinced and your will be committed and with all your heart publicly express your love to Him.

15. God's Provision for the Dying World

Psalm 67

We have seen God's plan for the dying world in Psalm 2. Now we turn to God's provision for the dying world in Psalm 67. It must have been sung many times in worship and it carries in it truths that were to be deeply implanted upon the minds and hearts of God's people. That is why the study of this Psalm is very important.

What was the occasion of this Psalm? Some feel that probably there was a bumper harvest when the Psalm was written. Others feel that it was not any particular harvest that is referred to but God's blessing on the land which produces harvest.

I. God's promise (67:1,2): Gen.12:1-3; Ex.19-5; Is. 49:6; Ps.72:17; Acts 3:25, 26; Gal. 3:7, 8, 14, 16, 29; Rom. 15:8, 9; 16:25, 26; Rev.5:9, 10.

The sentence "God, our God, and May He bless us" is translated in the future use in some places. In v.6 it is "God, our God will bless us," in v.7 "God will bless us" and in v.1 it is a prayer petition. It is in the Hebrew imperfect tense which as Alexander Maclaren says, can be a prophetic utterance or a petition asking God to make it so. It is an aspiration, a prayer. "May God be gracious to us and bless us, may your ways be known on earth, may the people praise you." All these tell us of the great longings in the heart of the Psalmist.

Now for a close look. V.1 and 2 are a prayer for blessing, taken from the Aaronic blessing in the Book of Numbers. It is the prayer of blessing that God gave for Aaron to offer on behalf of God's people. In Numbers 6:22-24 God asks Moses to tell Aaron and his sons how they should bless the Israelites. When the priests and the Levites blessed the people, they used these words in the Temple in Jerusalem and from there it came into Christian worship. So we use this as a benediction in many of our worship services. "The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace." They were used to hearing this prayer and we find it many times in the Book of Psalms. And it is repeated several times that God should make His face shine upon them.

In Psalm 80:3 we read, "Restore us, O God; make your face shine

upon us, that we may be saved." Again Psalm 80:7 says, "Restore us, O God Almighty; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved." Psalm 80 also was a psalm set to music. And this verse seems to be a refrain in that psalm, "Make your face shine that we may be saved." Again in verse 19 we read, "Restore us, O Lord God Almighty; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved." Again and again God was asked to make His face shine upon His people. Among the Israelites, it was a great longing for many to have the blessing of God upon them. We find it from a very early period in their history.

II. Prayer for Blessings

Think of the great longing that Jacob had, Genesis 32. We find this in his wrestling with that supernatural being that we believe was the Angel of the Lord, an appearance of the second Person of the Trinity. Jacob adopted a very questionable method to get blessing. He deceived his father Isaac and received the blessing that was to be given to Esau his elder brother. Though his methods were wrong, his desire was for blessing. In I Chronicles 4:9 a little known man called Jabez is mentioned. When he was born, his mother called him Jabez which means 'misery.' What a name to carry around! He was misery because he gave much pain to his mother at birth. What hope was there for a man like that? What did Mr. Misery do? We note in I Chronicles 4:10 that he cried out to the God of Israel, "O that you would bless me!" He knew that it was his only hope. Is it wrong to pray for blessing?

The people said, "May God be gracious to us." They knew that the blessing was based on grace. So they were saying, "Extend your grace to us and on the basis of that grace you bless us." They also prayed, "And make His face shine upon us." Some translations say 'among' instead of 'upon.' This God who will bless us is a God who is in our midst. The light shines from within. God lives among His people and blesses them and shines among them.

It is not wrong to pray for blessing. The wrong comes when you neglect and stop only with v. 1. There is a doctrine known as 'the prosperity doctrine.' It says that if you believe in Jesus, you will get a job and if you have girls or boys of marriageable age, you will find good partners for them. If you have applied for a job in the Middle

East, surely you will get it. You will live a long life, all your sickness will be healed, your tears will be wiped away, and your burdens will be lifted.

This is only half truth and therefore a heresy. Jesus Christ does not exist merely to prosper us in our business. He is sovereign. In prosperity doctrine, there is no adequate concept of the sovereignty of God. There is no place for the Cross and for the mystery of suffering. Jesus Christ is not a pain killer. He can remove our pain and heal our sicknesses. He can deliver us from evil spirits. There is so much that we can enjoy in Him, so many privileges we can appropriate from Him, which we don't. But He is Sovereign and He has His purposes. We should be linked with His purposes and should not bring Him down to work out our plans for our lives. It is not wrong to pray for blessing and prosperity but it must be done in the context of His Sovereignty and His purposes, yielding ourselves to His plans and purposes.

God has given in Scripture His promises to His people. In these promises we find a revelation of God's missionary heart. We often think that mission in Scriptures is found only in a few verses in the New Testament, mostly in the great commission passages. If so, we can make mission just one department in our local church or in a seminary. We can have it as a good hobby and then forget about it. But that is not what we see in the Bible. It is woven right through God's purpose in Scripture. If so, we must get turned on missions. Mission is an integral part in God's purpose.

1. Two-tier Promise

In Genesis 12:2; 3 God called Abraham for blessings. "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and whoever curses you I will curse. And all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." This is a two-tier promise. The first tier is, "I will bless you." The second tier is, "All peoples on earth will be blessed through you." God is not a Zionist, He had chosen Abraham and his descendants so that through them blessings will come to the whole world - Arab, Jew, black, white, brown, yellow and to everyone. In King James Version the word 'families' is used in Genesis 12:3. Most

of our Indian language translations use the word 'vamsha' which means 'clan.' So God told Abraham, "Through you all the groupings of people on earth will be blessed." The word 'nations' represents ethnic groups. The words 'tribes' and 'languages' are also used.

When God sees the human race, He sees it as a beautiful mosaic of various languages, cultures and ethnicity. What God has allowed to be a beautiful mosaic, man has used to create barriers. Variety is God-created. Just because man has abused them, we should not curse the distinctions. Sinful man uses these distinctions to divide man from man. That is when it becomes sin. Caste has no place in these groupings. Caste has been introduced by sinful men in this land to suppress other men. If we recognize it in our missiological thinking and give it credibility, we will be going contrary to God's will. God sees this beautiful mosaic of cultural, ethnic and linguistic groups and wills that His blessing should reach all of them. That is why He called Abraham.

2. His Treasured Possession

Now let us look at the next milestone in the history of God's people. In Exodus 19:5, 6 we read, "If you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." God was constituting these tribes that have been redeemed from Egypt to be a people for Him. He made a covenant with them and gave them this promise. The first tier of the promise is this, "Out of all nations you will be my treasured possession." That is a privilege.

Then He says, "Although the whole earth is mine you will be for me a kingdom of priests." "You will be a people among whom my rule will be established. You will be my Kingdom community. And then you will also be priests. You will serve me. You will stand between other peoples and me. You will be a holy nation." The word 'holy' means "separated" consecrated for His purposes. The first tier in the promise is "You will be my prized possession." The second tier is, "You will be my priests, and you will be under my rule and will be separated for my purpose."

3. A Temple

Then we come to 1 Kings 8, another milestone in the history of God's people when the temple was built and dedicated. Among the institutions that God gave to Israel the temple was the most strategic structure. That is why they began to take false pride in it. They said, "As long as this temple is here among us, no one will touch us, we have security". When the temple was dedicated, Solomon prayed, 1 Kings 8:41-43: "As for the foreigner who does not belong to your people Israel but has come from a distant land because of your name...When he comes and prays towards this temple, then hear from Heaven your dwelling place and do whatever the foreigner asks of you, so that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you as do your own people Israel." Look again at v. 60. "So that all the peoples of the earth may know that the Lord is God and that there is no other." What was the first tier? A temple for them to pray and seek God's blessing. The second tier is that all the peoples of the earth may know His name.

God never gave a blessing to His people to be kept selfishly. He never gave a structure or an institution to His people for their own benefit. Everything was linked with His missionary purpose. What happens today? We have grabbed the institutions that God has given to us and selfishly used them. We have forgotten God's missionary purpose and so they have become breeding grounds for all sorts of problems. Our hospitals and schools, our constitutions and structures were intended not only for our blessing but that God may bless others.

We have forgotten this and hence the judgment of God upon us. The very constitution that should be a means of blessing to make us more orderly and systematic so we will be a blessing to others - is used to go to court. What God intended to be a blessing has become a curse because we have missed God's missionary purpose behind all this. I am talking to the younger generation. The whole future is before you. You can mould the church in this land for the glory of Christ. Will you restore to the Church of Jesus Christ in this land missionary passion and purpose which is in all of God's promises of blessing?

4. Messianic Prophecies

Then we go on to the Messianic prophecies. Isaiah 49:6 mentions the Servant of the Lord. This mysterious figure is the Messiah. Our Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled these prophecies. It was not as though Jesus came around and found these good verses and applied them to himself and said they fulfilled His ministry. No! They were predictive prophecies, intended to portray His mission and ministry. Isaiah 49:6 says, "Is it too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept? I will make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth." The first tier is "You will restore the tribes of Jacob." The second tier is "I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth." Isaiah 66:18 says, "And I because of their actions and their imaginations am about to come and gather all nations and tongues and they will come and see my glory." The first tier is, "I am going to gather my people and then I am going to send them as witnesses to all other nations to proclaim my glory." The second tier is "I will gather all nations and tongues and they will come and see my glory."

Right through Scripture we find this and in the Gospels, our Lord recognized this. Matthew 8:11 says, "I say to you many will come from the East and the West and will take their places at the feast with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven." Jesus was saying that the two-tier promise given to Abraham will be fulfilled when many will come from the East and the West and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Revelation 5:9, 10 says, "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth." This reminds us of that first promise in Exodus 19:5, 6 about the Kingdom community.

5. God's Missionary Purpose

This is what turned Paul on. Have you noticed that in all his writings he never mentions the great commission passages? Why did not Paul quote them? Was Paul at variance with Jesus? Was Paul's

theology different from that of Jesus? No, we do not believe that, because what Jesus had said in the great commission passages is there in Paul's writings. Paul was aware of them. But he derived the missionary passion as he discovered God's missionary purpose in the Old Testament. In Romans 5:21 he quotes Isaiah 52:15. He quotes from the entire Old Testament. God's missionary purpose is revealed throughout the Scriptures.

Writing to the Galatians, Paul speaks about Abrahamic blessings. "Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith and announced the Gospel in advance to Abraham: All nations will be blessed through you... He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham may come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit" (Galatians 3:7, 8, 14). God gave the promise to Abraham, "I will bless you and through you I will bless every clan, every tribe, every language and every people." That blessing becomes ours by faith in Christ. Now therefore it goes without saying that the responsibility is also passed on to us. That is why every believer must be concerned about reaching every tribe, language, and nation and people on this earth, whether they are in cities, campuses or remote villages on hills and plains.

God may call you to be a missionary. If He does not, still you should carry in your heart a passion to do all you can to see that these people are reached with the Gospel.

6. God's glory fills the Earth

Let us turn again to Psalm 67:1, 2. "May God be gracious to us and bless us and make His face to shine upon us. May your ways be known on earth, your salvation among all nations." The two blessings that should come to all nations are the knowledge of God's ways and His salvation. In Isaiah 6:3 we read, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of His glory". Isaiah saw that as happening already. The whole earth is full of His glory now. Isaiah 11:9 says, "The earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." Now it is only those who have the vision that God is the Victor and believe that already this earth belongs to Him who will claim it for

Him. God has promised that the knowledge of the Lord will go to the ends of the earth and His salvation to all nations. So we can pray for it.

7. God's Missionary Context

Whenever we pray for blessing, in what context do we pray? It must be the context of God's missionary purpose. We must pray, "Lord, bless me, so that through me those who have not heard about you and do know you will be blessed." How do you pray for your marriage? Do you pray in the context of God's missionary purpose? As a believer, you are an inheritor of Abraham's two-tier promise and you cannot pray for yourself except in that context. It is true that God is interested in your marriage and your career. Put those things within God's greater plan. Your little world must find its place within God's greater world. Otherwise it will crash. So when the people of God prayed, they prayed with this consciousness.

They said, "God, you bless us in such a way that others will see that we belong to you and through that glory will come to you." Every time Israel had a rich harvest, God was glorified. We read in Jeremiah 33:9, "Then this city will bring me renown, joy, praise and honour before all nations on earth that hear of all the good things I do for it; and they will be in awe and tremble at the abundant prosperity and peace I provide for it." God provides peace, prosperity and blessing to Jerusalem and others hear about it and recognize Him. We do not seek a blessing just for ourselves selfishly. You should pray, "God help me to get through the exam so that through this your purposes will be fulfilled and those who do not know you will come to know you and your Church will be established and your Kingdom will spread."

Vv. 3 and 5 form a kind of refrain. Let us look at them. "May the peoples praise you O Lord God! May the peoples praise you O God! May all the peoples praise you." This is praise and worship. The psalmist was saying, "God, you bless us so that your way may be known among all the peoples and your salvation reach all nations and therefore all the peoples would worship you." That is the order, the knowledge of God, salvation and worship.

8. Goal of Mission

What is the goal of mission? Is it church planting? We hear a lot

about it these days. It is an important goal. The goal of missions is not merely the conversion of individuals. It is to build the Church of Jesus Christ. But we must remember that through the Church God's manifold wisdom is revealed to principalities and powers, Ephesians 3:10. Through the Church, worship is offered to Him. That is the goal of mission-worship.

Where does the Kingdom of God fit in here? The Church is a signpost of God's Kingdom. It is the agent of the Kingdom. In some circles today, there is a lot of talk about the Kingdom in relation to mission but there is no mention of the Church. This is lopsided. It is the Church which is the agent of the Kingdom, the witness to the Kingdom. It is the Kingdom community. Through the Church, worship and glory must be offered to His name. That is the ultimate result of mission. What a wonderful goal to work for! One day Jesus will be worshipped by all peoples and nations and languages.

The word "God" used in v.3 is rendered in some translations as "Lord". Psalm 67 comes in the second Book of Psalter where we do not find the name Jehovah at all. We find only the word "God" used here. So probably some manuscripts use the word God here also. But there are others who use the word Jehovah, Lord. Peoples and nations will come to know Jehovah, the true and living God, and the revealed God as their God. They will find salvation and then they will praise and worship Him.

II. God's providence (67:4)

V.4 says, "May the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you rule the people justly and guide the nations of the earth". There are two things mentioned here. God will judge. The word 'judge' (translated in the NIV as 'rule' really means rule.) God will rule with justice. God's justice will be established on this earth. The word 'guide' that is used here is the same word that is used in Psalm 23:3. The shepherd leads the flock. It is used in Psalm 23:3. The shepherd leads the flock. It is used in Psalm 78 to portray God guiding His people through the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire. On the one hand He is an impartial, strict ruler and, on the other, He is a shepherd with a tender heart guiding His people. The nations recognize Him and come under His rule and direction.

In this world of injustice, oppression and exploitation what is our hope? God who will rule with justice, God who will tenderly guide and lead His people - that is the hope. The nations rejoice when they hear about this. It comes through the preaching of the Gospel and the planting of the church and the extension of God's rule among his people and through His people. Let us keep this in the right order. Whenever we talk about evangelism and social action as partners, evangelism is always the casualty. We should not join together what God has not put together. Social action is the responsibility of the church because God has said that we must be the salt of the earth, the light of the world and good neighbours. All that is a part of our Christian discipleship. But we should not bring it all together under mission and thus lose the sharp edge of proclaiming the Gospel.

III. God's purpose (6:3, 5, 7):

Not only do we see God's promise and God's provision for the nations but God's purpose is revealed in v. 7. "God will bless us and all the ends of the earth will fear Him." Fear is not abject terror but loving adoration and godly fear. They submit to Him. There is obedience in godly fear. What other manifesto can you and I have for a dying world? There is more here to challenge us than in Mao Tse Tung's Red Book or in Karl Marx's Manifesto. It is a challenge to us. Give yourself to this. Worship God, know Him and fear Him and you have a goal to live and work for. All the nations, peoples, tribes and languages should know Him, worship Him, walk in submission to Him and then His justice and His Shepherd care will prevail over them.

IV. Missions and Church

16. Missions according to Jesus The Commission

Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-20;

Luke 24:36-49; John 20:19-23; Acts 1:8

It is not possible to study the five Great Commission passages one by one in detail in two days, so we are looking at them together to study the different aspects of the Commission. We will look at four, namely: power, programme, place and pattern.

I. Power - *Matthew 28:18; Mark 16:17-20; Luke 24:49; John 20:22; Acts 1:8*

One of the main emphases in all the Great Commission passages is that the disciples would receive the power of the Holy Spirit and then go out with the good news. Luke brings out the relationship between the power of the Spirit and witnessing (Luke 24:48, 49; Acts 1:8). According to John, after indicating that they would receive the Spirit from Him through a prophetic, symbolic action, Jesus said that they would be channels of forgiveness of sin. The power of the Spirit was intended to confirm the spoken word and make their witness effective (Mark 16:20; 1 Thess. 1:5).

In Mark 16:17-18 we see the manifestations of the power of the Holy Spirit in signs and wonders. These must be seen in the context of the Commission. When His disciples went on His mission, they would overcome Satan's forces, have the ability to communicate the Gospel in new languages, be saved from dangers and bring healing to the sick. All these would be used to confirm the spoken message. The Word is at the centre of the Commission and the signs and wonders serve to confirm the Word. The Holy Spirit can and does confirm the Word without signs and wonders also, as happened in Antioch (Syria), Antioch (Pisidia), Berea and Athens.

In Matthew 28:18 our Lord mentions His authority. Authority is given from above and power is given within through the indwelling and infilling Holy Spirit. See Ephesians 1:19-22; 3:16.

II. The Purpose of Authority - Matthew 16:18, 19; 12:29

In missions, conflict with evil, evil systems and structures and the Evil One (Satan) is inevitable. It is for this encounter with Satan and his agents that we need the authority which Christ gives.

Satan holds sway over unreached peoples. Unless we bind him with Christ's authority we cannot bring them into the kingdom of God (Matt. 12:29; Col. 1:13).

The Secret of Authority - Luke 7:8; John 20:21

In John 20:21, the word used for the Father's sending is *apostello* while the word for the sending of the disciples is *beinbo*. The former means sending with delegated authority while the latter means sending under authority. We do not have authority in ourselves. We have authority as long as we are under His orders fulfilling His commission. When we accept His authority and submit to it, we have authority. This is what the centurion said in Luke 7:8, "As long as I am under authority, I have authority." This is the authority an ambassador has on behalf of his country.

The secret of power is that we be yielded to Christ so His power works in us and through us (Col. 1:29). The secret of authority is that we be under His authority. We do not become containers of power but channels of power.

III. Programme - Matthew 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:23; Acts 1:8

1) Verbal proclamation is central to the Commission, as we see in these passages. Note the words "teach," "preach" and "witness." John 20:23 poses a problem. Did our Lord give the disciples the authority to forgive sins? In other parts of Scripture we read that only Christ has the authority to forgive sins (Mark 2:10). From Luke 24:47, we can infer that they were given the authority to proclaim forgiveness and to be channels of God's forgiveness to people. We also see that signs and wonders derive their validity from the message that is proclaimed and are intended to confirm the message (Mark 16:20; Acts 4:29, 30).

The disciples should witness about Christ (Acts 1:8), preach the good news about Him and bring about forgiveness in His name (Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46, 47) and teach what He has commanded them (Matt

28:20). It was neither a "health-wealth" gospel nor a gospel of political, social and economic liberation, but a Gospel of salvation from sin. It is rooted in Scripture (Luke 24:46), centered in Christ (Luke 24:46) and is about forgiveness of sin in His name (Luke 24:47; John 20:23; Acts 2:38; 10:43).

2) Secondly, disciple making is central to the Commission. It is not mere proclamation, but proclamation with persuasion - leading to the winning of converts and the making of disciples. It is important to note this in our Asian context, where, due to the plurality of religions, people are used to endless religious discourses and lectures expounding their own philosophies and ethics, and proselytism is an ugly word.

In Matthew 28:18-20, the main imperative is make disciples. The other verbs are in the participle form - going, baptizing, teaching. Going is not the chief command in missions! Mere geographical transfer or crossing the ocean does not make a person a missionary. Baptising is an integral part of the missionary task. It indicates the formation of a community. That is why we find the expression "baptize in (into) the name of Jesus" in Acts (2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5), which meant that they were baptized into the community of Jesus. This is not a denial of the Trinitarian formula in baptism. Baptism also indicates a public break with their past beliefs and practices. Teaching is a necessary part of making disciples.

IV. Place - Matthew 28:18; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47; John 17:18; Acts 1:8

Where should they fulfill the Commission? Where is the location for doing missions? Matthew 28:18 and Luke 24:47 use the word nations. This means non-Jewish ethnic groups. The Bible uses the words "nations," "peoples," "languages," and "tribes" to describe the human race. It is a beautiful mosaic made up of various groups of people defined culturally, ethnically and linguistically. We are called to preach, make disciples and form a community of believers among these people groups.

John used the word **world**. In his Gospel he portrays the world as the object of God's love (3:16), as not accepting or knowing the Spirit of truth (14:17), as ruled by Satan (14:30), as giving trouble to His disciples (16:33) and hating them because they do not belong to it (17:14). This is the world into which they must go and fulfill the

Commission.

Mark uses the word **creation**. Our mission has a cosmic significance. It affects the entire creation. The destiny of the created universe is linked with the destiny of mankind. When man sinned, the consequences of his sin affected the entire creation (Gen.3:17, 18; Rom. 8:20). When man would experience the consummation of his redemption, creation also would be liberated (Rom.8:21). So the message of salvation is good news not only for man, but also for the entire creation.

In Acts 1:8, "**Jerusalem**," "**Judea**," "**Samaria**" and the "**the ends of the earth**" are mentioned. Jesus did not say that they should finish witnessing in Jerusalem and then go to Judea or finish the work in Judea and then go to Samaria. The conjunction "and" is used implying that witnessing must go on simultaneously in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth.

Jerusalem was the place of failure and fear. Judea was the place of religious bigotry and self-sufficiency, a difficult place. Samaria was the place of hatred. They should fulfill the Commission in all these places. Galilee was not mentioned probably because most of their work during the earthly life of our Lord was done in Galilee and Berea.

V. Pattern - John 20:21

Jesus sent the disciples as the Father had sent Him. His mission provided the pattern for their mission. His sending of the disciples was in continuation of the Father sending Him. His model is seen in three aspects - sacrifice, servant-hood and suffering. This is also seen in Philippians 2:6-8.

He left heaven's glory and lived among men (John 1:14; Heb.4:15). In His **identification** with those whom He came to serve and redeem, we see the pattern for our mission. We cannot save from a distance. Identification with the people among whom we work is very important. One of the main requirements for such identification is learning the language of the people. In His incarnational model, identification with people and sensitivity to their culture and lifestyle are important. This requires **sacrifice**.

Not only did Jesus become man, He also became a servant (Mark 10:45; Phil. 2:7). The most effective image of the missionary in Asia is that of a servant. **Servant-hood** was a hallmark of New Testament

missions (2 Cor. 4:5). Unfortunately in modern missions the image that is often projected is that of a conqueror or a manager.

Jesus suffered. It is significant that in John 20:21, 22 He showed them His scars and then gave the Commission. **Suffering** is not an occupational hazard or an accident; it is the badge of the missionary. Paul recognized this (Phil. 3:10; Col. 1:24). See Paul's commission in Acts 9:15, 16. The spirit of triumphalism often seen in modern missions is contrary to the spirit of New Testament missions. The principle our Lord gave in John 12:24 is still valid.

17. Missions according to Jesus The Commissioned Ones

Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-20;
Luke 24:36-49; John 20:19-23; Acts 1:8

The five passages given above can be called the Great Commission passages because they describe the commission which our Lord gave to his disciples before He left this world. It is called the Great Commission to distinguish it from the commission He gave to them when he sent them out in the middle of His earthly ministry. We will look at the qualities of the persons to whom the Great Commission was given.

I. The Obedient Ones - Matthew 28:16

They obeyed the words of our Lord which they heard through the women who had met the risen Christ (Matt. 28:8-10). They had the willingness to receive His direction through any source. They were willing to listen.

II. The Worshipping Ones - Matthew 28:17

They saw the risen Christ and worshipped Him. Like Thomas, they acknowledged Him as Lord and God (John 20:28). Missions begin in worship and culminate in worship. A powerful incentive for missions is the desire to get people to worship the true God revealed in Christ (John 4:23). See Revelation 7:9.

III. The Believing Ones - Luke 24:36-43; John 20:20

The risen Christ took careful steps to convince them of His bodily resurrection. That is why He showed them His hands and His feet and ate the piece of broiled fish in their presence (Luke 24:29-43). In verse 43, note the words "in their presence."

Again in John 20:20 we read, "He showed them his hands and side." Only after they believed that it was the risen Christ, present bodily with them, did He give them the Commission. Anyone who does not believe in the bodily resurrection of Christ cannot be a missionary carrying His good news of salvation.

IV. The Instructed Ones - Luke 24:44-47

The risen Christ paid special attention to showing the disciples how the Scriptures pointed to Him and His suffering, death and resurrection. He reminded them of what He had taught them about Himself from the Scriptures (verse 44). The Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms represented the entire Old Testament Scripture. The Old Testament pointed to Christ. "He opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures." The word "opened" means "disentangled." A mind that is clogged with doubt and cluttered up with selfish interests cannot see Christ in the Scriptures. Our minds must be prepared before we can understand the Bible. How wonderful it is to be taught of the Lord!

V. The Reconciled Ones - John 20:19, 21

On the evening of Resurrection Sunday the disciples were inside a locked room "for fear of the Jews." Their fear must have been accompanied by guilt. They must have been filled with a sense of failure. One of them had denied Him, while the others had deserted Him in danger. While fear and guilt kept them behind closed doors, Jesus came in. He greeted them with the words, "Peace be with you." This was the regular word of greeting among the Jews. But Jesus repeated it, so it was intended to be more than a greeting. He was offering to them peace with God and the peace of God.

Those who proclaim the message of forgiveness of sin must themselves have experienced the forgiveness of sin. We are not fit to receive the commission if we are not reconciled to God. Not sinless people, but forgiven people are the bearers of the good news of salvation. Not only must they have peace with God, but they should also have the peace of God ruling their hearts and guarding them (Col. 3:15; Phil. 4:7). The words, "Do not be anxious about anything" (Phil. 4:6), can be interpreted as "Do not let your mind be divided by anxiety." Those who are distracted by worry cannot be the messengers of God's peace.

VI. The Sent Ones - John 20:21

The verb, "has sent," in the perfect tense indicates that there is a continuing effect of the Father's sending the Son, and in that continued effect, we are sent. Christ's sending us is a continuation of

the Father sending Him. Our mission is a continuation of His mission. He identifies Himself with us in our mission.

It is not our mission, it is a God-centered, God-honoring mission. We should never forget the divine dimension in this mission. It is not a humanitarian, humanistic activity. Also, there is no place for independence or individualism in missions. We are under orders as the sent ones. We cannot "do our own thing" for Christ or for needy people. We must do what He has commissioned us to do.

VII. The Empowered Ones - Luke 24:49; John 20:22; Acts 1:8

The disciples were weak and unfit in themselves. But they were equipped with the power of the Holy Spirit. They were sent to be witnesses in Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. But they were afraid to confess Christ in Jerusalem, and were instead, inside a closed room. They had no courage to witness in Judea and they had no love for Samaria. They did not believe that salvation was also for the Gentiles. How then could they go to the ends of the earth? In their fear, hatred and prejudice they needed the power of the Holy Spirit to cleanse and set them free so they could be witnesses according to God's plan. The power of the Holy Spirit enabled them to fulfill the purpose of God.

18. The Church at Large

Taken from Outreach Jan 1990

The Christian Church is the most multi-cultural, multinational and multi-racial body in the world. There is a worldwide Church today. The challenges and the opportunities that face the Church today in each country and among each people are also different. The human race is a beautiful mosaic of various races, cultures (people), languages and tribes. The Bible recognizes these distinctions. These distinctions are not intended to create division and strife but to reflect the beauty of God's creation in variety.

I. Denmark

I was in Denmark at the invitation of the Evangelical Alliance of Denmark to speak in the churches of that country. The Lutheran Church which is the State Church is the largest denomination in Denmark. Next in strength are the Roman Catholic Church and then the Pentecostal church with 10,000 members. Besides these there are Methodists, Baptists and Brethren. Denmark had experienced revival in the Lutheran Church very early. Out of this revival came hymns which are still used in the Lutheran Church. But now the church attendance is very low and the moral and spiritual condition is appalling. Liberal theology has robbed the church of its vitality and relevance. So the people, particularly the young, are turning to cults, new religious movements and Scientology. Hindu and Buddhist sects have their centres in this country recruiting a large number of followers. Hindu gurus whose names are not even known in India are marketing their wares in Denmark.

II. Crisis in missions

Why are the people deserting the Church and turning to these cults and eastern religions? Earlier during the Reformation there was orthodox theology without adequate emphasis on heart religion. Then came liberal theology robbing the Church of its faith in the uniqueness of Christ as Saviour and Lord. Thus the Church became irrelevant. The crisis in missions today revolves around this issue - is Christ the only way to salvation? Is He the unique Saviour and Lord?

Liberal theology either denies the uniqueness of Christ outright or evades the issue thereby putting itself out of the arena in missions. A Church which does not believe in the uniqueness of Christ cannot be relevant, nor can it do missions today. There is a great need for missionary work among the hundreds of Europeans who have come to India and Nepal seeking for truth in Hinduism and Buddhism.

I met a young girl in a church gathering. She and her husband are both brilliant engineers. She has had two nervous breakdowns and her husband was going through one. They were on the verge of divorce. She was interested in communicating with intelligent beings in other planets and with spirits. She did not know who Jesus was. She said that He was a good man who said many good things! This was in Denmark which had gone through the reformation in the 1500s and a spiritual revival later. It was the king of Denmark who sponsored Ziegenbalg and Plutschau to go as the first Protestant missionaries to India from the University of Halle.

III. Mission 89

From Denmark I went to Argentina to speak in Mission '89 which was a World Missions Congress held in Mar del Plata. Two thousand delegates attended the Congress from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay. The urgency to reach the remaining unreached people groups in Latin America and in the world was earnestly faced by the participants. All the evangelical denominations in these countries participated in the Congress. The delegates consisted of pastors and lay people, a large number being young people. As these countries are going through economical crisis, the key issue was "How can we do missions in the context of poverty?" As the Congress progressed, there was a spirit of hope and faith overcoming the initial pessimism. In the closing meeting, several hundred young people and others committed themselves for full time missionary work. Poverty is not the problem in missions but disobedience is. At the centre of missions we do not place money but the consecration of lives.

19. Local church in Missions

A few years back we had a person who wanted to join the work in the IEM and I was talking to him. I asked him about his involvement in the church. I said, 'I'm sure you must be very active in your local church. What are you doing in your church?' 'Oh I like church politics,' he said. He did not realize what he was saying but then that's an adult view of the church. A woman once said, 'Oh we've not been having some women's meetings lately. I was going to learn how to make orange marmalade but the women's fellowship is not meeting.' Now that's a woman's idea of church. But thank God that is not what all people think of the Church. Now where do we stand to understand what the church is? We do not reject what others have talked about it, or written about it.

There are some people who are very allergic to the word 'theology' and I would say, unfortunately they do not even know the meaning of the word 'theology.' That is why they are allergic to that word. What is theology? It is our understanding of God, our knowledge of God that we receive from the Scripture. There is systematic theology which men like John Calvin, John Wesley, Martin Luther and others spoke regarding their understanding of God through the Scriptures and of late men have also added tradition and also human experience and they have fortified it and that is called systematic theology. Now not all systematic theology is acceptable but just because of that do not reject the word 'theology.' There is what we know as biblical theology and the word theology is not a poison, it is not wrong. It really means the knowledge of God, the study of God, the word about God and it is what we know about God from the Bible. So the person, who says 'I don't believe in theology,' does not know what he is talking about because when he studies the Bible and talks about God, he talks theology himself.

What do people say the Church is? Here are some good definitions which are biblical and you will find them in this little book, "The Local Church and Mission" available at the IEM.

In the Westminster Confession the visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men in which the pure Word of God is preached and the sacrament duly ministered. Howard Snyder says, 'I believe the most biblical definition is to say the church is a community

of God's people.' The Lausanne covenant, which is very good, says, 'the church is a community of God's people rather than an institution and it must not be identified with any particular culture, social or political system or human ideology.' Now the Lausanne covenant was drafted after that great congress on world evangelization which was held in Lausanne, Switzerland in 1974. It is something which all evangelicals accept.

1. Definitions of Church

From these definitions you notice in simple words

1. **'The church is a community of God's people.'** It is not a building. It is not an institution. It is not the denomination. It is not an organization. It is the community of God's people. Now the Bible says something about the community of God's people. If we understand what the Bible says about it then we cannot deny that the church has a mission and the church must be involved in missions. There are 2 ways of looking at this. One is we can see what the Bible says about the community of God's people both in the Old and New Testaments and then we will look at some of the images, pictures that are used in the New Testament for this church.

Now in the Old Testament the community of God's people was the people of Israel. God brought them out of Egypt through the Red Sea, comparable very much to the redemption that was worked out through Calvary's cross. This was also an act of deliverance not a mere political liberation from oppression. It was a divine act of redemption from the slavery in Egypt through the Red Sea; He brought them to the foot of Mount Sinai, entered into a covenant with them and constituted them to be His people. Then what did He tell them? Exodus 19:5, 6, 'If you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' I want you to note that word 'priests.' God says to His people Israel, 'You are my priests.' Now why did He give them Aaron? Why did He give them Aaron's sons as priests? Why did He give them the priesthood? God did not give them the priest. We read about it in the other parts of the Pentateuch but that did not

nullify His statement that they were to be His priests, all of them. But the other priests that were appointed were only representatives of the community. The Levites and the priests represented the community before God in their service to God. But His intention is that the entire community be priests.

2. Witnesses: And then let us turn again in the Old Testament to Isaiah 43:10, 'You are my witnesses,' declares the Lord, 'and my servant whom I have chosen.' Now notice the number of the noun in this verse. 'Witnesses' is in plural and servant is in the singular number. Why, because there is a truth that we have to learn here. God's people ought to be priests, that is each member of the community of God's people is a priest and each member of the community of God's people is a witness and then God's people as a whole ought to be His servant corporately. They ought to be his servant in the singular. How beautifully God describes the mission of His people in the Old Testament.

Now as priests what should they do? As priests they represent the nation and other people before God. They pray for them. They intercede before God. Then they represent God to the other nations, the other peoples. Speak in the name of God. Declare God's glory to other nations. So as priests they have to do this. And as witnesses they had to speak about Him and His great acts of creation and redemption as we read in Isaiah, to the other nations. Then they were to be his servants fulfilling His will, his purpose. Now this is the Old Testament.

Now come to the New Testament and you find the same idea here in the New Testament. We find in 1Peter 2:9, 'You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.' Notice here in this one verse He repeats what He has told His people Israel. But this time, God through Peter is speaking to His New Testament community, to the church and He is saying, 'You are a chosen people, you are a royal priesthood.' They are priests, again he said. And then he says, 'you may declare the praises of him,' or they are to be His witnesses.

Then let's look at a few more verses. Ephesians 4:11, 12, 'It was He that is the risen Christ who gave some to be apostles, some

to be prophets, some to be evangelists and some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God's people for works of service so that the Body of Christ may be built up.' Notice very carefully the NIV is very clear here, the prophets were given, the evangelists were given, the pastors and teachers were given to prepare God's people for service.

3. **Servants:** So the community of God's people is to be His servant to serve. That is clear in that verse. Again look at the book of Acts 1:8, 'You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.' They are to be His witnesses. Now there is one final word in Rev. 5:10, 'You have made them that are a people from every tribe, from every language, from every people and nation. You have made them the gathered community to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God and they will reign on the earth.' So you see again those 3 pictures. They are to be priests, witnesses and His servants. The community of God's people is called to this. Then what are you? Who are you serving? Whether you are an engineer, a teacher, a student or a doctor, whatever you are, whoever you are, you too are a servant of God. Every child of God is called to be a priest. Every child of God is called to be a witness. The community of the people of God together is called to be the servant of God. This is what the Bible teaches.

II. Images of the church

Now let us look at some of the images that are given of the church, word pictures used to represent the Church. In Ephesians 2, the Church, the community of God's people as we have read, was created by the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 2:14, 15-on the cross Christ broke the barriers that existed and made out of the Jew and the Gentile, one new man, and that is the Church, the body of God's people. So it's by the cross. Verse 8 of Ephesians 2, 'the same Spirit of the same Father dwelt in all, so it's through the Spirit that the Church was consecrated, 1 Corinthians 12:13 says the same thing. Who formed the Church there? We were all baptized by one Spirit into one body whether Jews, or Greeks, slave or free and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.' There is no racism, no casteism, no lingualism, no

regionalism, no colour in the church, all barriers broken, by the cross and the Holy Spirit baptizing all into one body. So the Church is not created by any human being, by any leader. It is God's creation.

But this **community of God's people, created by the Holy Spirit and through the cross, this community is compared to various images.**

1. **Fellow Citizens:** In Ephesians 2:19, 'You are no longer foreigners and aliens but fellow citizens with God's people.' Some translations use the word commonwealth; we are members of a commonwealth. You are fellow citizens. Now here the implication is we have the same rights. Because the commonwealth in those days in the Greek political system represented a body of people who had the same rights, they were equal. There were no slaves, no masters; they were all the same with equal privileges and rights. So here you have the idea of the Church as consisting of people who have the same privileges, the same rights and no differences, no barriers of any kind to be tolerated within the church. Brothers and sisters, if believers would determine that the caste system is sin, casteism would go tomorrow. But the sad thing is, so called evangelicals perpetuate caste with pious language and it is an abomination. So we find within the church a commonwealth, all have equal rights and privileges.
2. **Members of God's Household:** Then you find the second picture, members of God's household. Here the picture is that of family, household. Now what does this signify? In the family we are of one fellowship. Now also members of the household, speaking of the fellowship, it is a caring and sharing fellowship. The church is a caring fellowship where we care for each other. We are brothers and sisters born into one family, God's family. We don't choose who should be there and who should not be there. We care for them and we share with them. So the emphasis here is fellowship.
3. **Built on the Word:** Then the third picture you find in Ephesians 2:20 'Built on the foundations of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.' Christ is the cornerstone holding everything together; the foundation consists of the apostles and the prophets. Now that means the

Scripture, the apostles who gave us the Scriptures and the prophets through whom the Word of God was communicated. The reference here of course is to the New Testament prophets but anyway it talks about the Word of God, the Scriptures. So on whom is the Church built? Not on Peter. Christ is the cornerstone and the Church is built on the Word of God, on Scriptures, on the truth of the Word of God. So it is very important that there is commitment to the Word of God in the Church. We can't say, 'It doesn't matter what you believe or what doctrines you have or what statement of things you have. Doctrine divides so let's forget doctrine and let's have a church with everything together.' That cannot be the Church according to the biblical sense. A church is defined according to Scripture by what it believes. It is founded on the teachings of the apostles and the prophets on the Scriptures.

2 Corinthians 11:2-4, Paul's emphasis there is on the need for doctrinal purity. There are some people today who are so wishy washy within the church-anything can go, anyone can preach anything from the pulpit. No. You as a member of the body of Christ have a responsibility as to what doctrine is propagated within your church and we have to guard the church. It should be pure in behavior and pure in belief. Purity of doctrine is needed and those of us who have tasted Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour and Lord and who stand on the Word of God and call ourselves evangelicals, let us take our place as watchdogs within our denominations, within our local churches. You may not be popular but that does not mean you should abdicate your responsibility. Commit yourself to the truth and not to any human beings, not to any institution but to Christ and His truth. The bride must be pure-Doctrinal purity.

4. **Body of Christ:** Then we read in 1 Corinthians 12 that the Church is the body of Christ. Now there are two truths here in this picture. If the Church is the body of Christ and if Christ is the head of the body, the head of the Church, the body does not prepare its own agenda. Today in some churches particularly in ecumenical circles when they talk about missions they think they have the freedom to talk about anything that should be talked about. For instance there was a statement made some

years back which said, 'the Word provides the agenda for the mission of the church.' Then there were some who said, 'we should take our cue for our missions from the political, economic, social situation the context in which we live.' I want to say, 'You cannot and you dare not because of the Church being the body of Christ and if He is the head of the Church, He gives the agenda, He gives the programme. He tells the body what the mission is.' It is not men and women gathering somewhere deciding what should be the agenda of the Church. It is Christ and He has given it in His Word and we dare not change it for any other agenda. So we fulfill His purpose, His will, we carry out his mission.

Secondly, this figure of the body, a body has many members, not all are equally honorable, not all are equally beautiful, and not all are equally visible. But then every member has a function which means every believer has a work to do in the Church. There are no lazy believers; there are no 'spectator' believers. There are no supervising believers. All are involved. The concept where we stand by and criticize and supervise and applaud those who are performing in the middle is totally unchristian. It has no place within the Church. Brother and Sister, if you have been only a spectator, supervising, criticizing in your local church you've gone out of God's order. Your discipleship is not what it should be. Get involved in your local church. You are a member of the body. The body of Christ is made visible in the local church.

A man came to a Christian preacher and said, 'I don't belong to any church. I belong to the universal church.' The preacher said, 'Then you must be a spiritual tramp today in Christendom.' They don't belong anywhere. A person who doesn't belong anywhere, who doesn't have a shelter, who doesn't accept any home as his own is called a tramp. There are many spiritual tramps.

Then there are many spiritual parasites. A parasite is a living organism and sucks its energies, strength and blood for its own sustenance. There are spiritual parasites that don't contribute but always receive and depend on others. They have to be nurtured. They'll criticize the pastor if he doesn't visit them.

They'll criticize the elders if they don't perform. They have to be given their views. Everything has to be done for them. They have no place in the body because in the body we have members and not parasites.

Then there are some today who are just spiritual caterpillars. What do I mean by that? Someone has said there are only two kinds of people in the church - The pillars and the caterpillars. The pillars are those who sustain the church, who serve in the church. The caterpillars crawl in and crawl out. They crawl in on Sunday mornings; they crawl out on Sunday mornings. They don't think on Sunday evenings because television is important. But they are called to be members. Not parasites, tramps or caterpillars. They are called to be members. Every member has a function.

Every member has a spiritual gift. This is the teaching of the Bible. If you are born again of the Spirit, if you are a member of the body of Christ, you have a spiritual gift. Because you have to perform and for your performance you have been given a gift. You may not have discovered it but don't say you don't have a gift. You may have kept your eye on someone else's gift or some other spectacular gift but that doesn't mean you don't have your gift. You haven't discovered it. You have a gift and it has to be discovered and used. Every member has a work to do, and has to be involved.

5. **God's Flock:** Then in 1 Peter 5:2 'Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care serving as overseers.' So here the church is compared to a flock and the picture of the pastor or the leader as a shepherd. So the flock needs to be nurtured and fed. So a church needs pastoral care, needs building up, needs the teaching ministry. And in Ephesians 4 we are told that it is a team ministry. It is not only the pastor and the assistant pastor but there is a team, evangelist, pastor teacher, prophets, and apostles all teaching and edifying and building up the body of Christ. So the flock needs to be fed.

6. **God's Field:** Then one last picture we notice in 1 Corinthians 3:9 is 'For we are God's fellow-workers, you are God's field, God's building.' Here the picture is that of a field, God's field. Now if we are God's field we must give to God the fruit, the harvest He

expects. So we must fulfill His purpose, we must please Him and give Him fruit.

So put all these pictures together and you get an idea of what the church is. In the church there are privileges for all of us. In the church there is caring and sharing fellowship. This encourages us, lifts us up. In the church we are taught, and established and built up on the Scriptures. In the church we worship in the Spirit. In the church we stand for purity of life and doctrine. We are made pure and holy constantly. In the church we are fed as a flock. In the church the harvest and the fruit is expected from us by God. In the church we have a mission because we are the body and the mission is that of Christ the head.

III. Mission of local church

Now what is this mission? What is the mission of the local church? Is the mission of the local church to be involved in the oppression and injustice that is found in the community nearby?

1. **Salt:** Jesus said to His disciples and to the community of God's people through them, 'you are the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13, 14). You are the salt of the earth and the light of the world.' Now what He implied there was, 'As the people of God you must stand against corruption, salt prevents corruption. Salt protects the meat from being spoiled. It is a preservative. So the church is to be a preservative to stand against corruption and evil. So that is the duty of the church. Not by marching on the streets but through its members influencing opinion and through its members speaking out where they should speak.
 2. **Light:** Then Jesus said 'You are the light of the world.' Light exposes. So the church is to be the conscience of society. It must have a prophetic voice in society. It must speak out against evil by focusing Scripture and the teaching of Scripture on evil and corruption. The church functions as the conscience of society. Now this is not the mission. These are Christian responsibilities that Jesus outlined on the Sermon on the Mount. It is a part of our Christian discipleship.
- When we confuse mission which Jesus clearly spells out with all of these other responsibilities which are given to God's people

than what is the casualty? The casualty is evangelism, preaching of the Gospel and the casualty is also the planting of churches. These have happened in many denominations and churches. Let us be warned against this danger. There is only one mission to the church and that is to preach the Gospel, to plant the church everywhere so that the church becomes the signpost and the witness to the kingdom of God. So ultimately it is related to the kingdom of God. That is the mission of the church. But we don't deny other responsibilities. We have to be the salt of the earth. We have to be the light of the world. Jesus also said we must be good neighbours. He taught that through the parable of the Good Samaritan. He taught that through the parable in Matthew 25, the last few verses about visiting those in prison, giving water to the thirsty, clothing the naked and feeding the hungry. He spoke about that there. He also said the two main commandments are: 'Love your God and then love your neighbor.' So in all these teachings he says to be a good neighbor. Be the salt, be the light, and be the good neighbor. That is to be involved in social work. Feed the poor, help the hungry and clothe the naked, visit those in prison and be concerned about human needs. These are our responsibilities. But don't confuse it with the mission. If you do, the casualty is the preaching of the Gospel and the planting of churches. Do you know why? Because it is easy to be involved in social needs. You become acceptable to win the applause of people and you gain recognition and you establish the validity for your presence in the community. So everything is fine, it's easy. But once you preach the Gospel, there is the offense of the cross, there is opposition, you gain a few enemies and so you don't want to do that. That is why the easy way is always to say the mission of the church is social responsibility, it's liberation, it's economic justice, or working for economic justice.

3. **God is committed to His Church:** We should not even say that social responsibility and evangelism are partners. What God has not joined together let not man put together. God has not joined social responsibility and evangelism together. Now please don't misunderstand me. A church which is not involved in human needs is insensitive to human need around it and

cannot be effective in its evangelism, which I agree with. But don't say they are two wings of the same bird, or they are the two legs of a man. They are different. One belongs to responsibility, duty and discipleship which we must carry out. The other belongs to specific mission, commission that the Lord Jesus gave to His church.

He said in Matthew 16:18 'I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' He said, 'I'm going to shed my blood, I'm going to die and rise again. And I'm going to build my church.' Then we read about it in Rev. 5:9, 'the Lamb was slain and he shed his blood so he could gather a community of people from every language, tribe and people and nation.' So here he declares his manifesto and now he has given that as our commission in all the four Gospels. So we are to preach the Gospel and plant the church. God is committed to the church. You notice in Ephesians 3:10 in fact in the whole chapter Paul talks much about the church. He says in verse 10 particularly 'His intent (God) was that now through the church the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms.' He said God's purpose from eternity has been to gather up in the body of Christ both Jews and Gentiles so that through the church his manifold wisdom may be made manifest to all the principalities and powers. God is committed to his church. If that is so what part do you have in planting the church, in building the church?

4. **No Individualism:** In belonging to the church, my brother, sister, please don't function as an individualist in Christian service. Associate with the local church. Be faithful to the local church. Choose your church, a place where the Word of God is honoured and preached, a place where the Spirit of God is at work, a place where Christ is honoured. Pick and choose. I'm not saying this is the only church or that is the only church. There is no perfect church on this earth. It will not remain perfect anymore once you join it, even if it had been perfect before. Jesus said the wheat and the tares must be left there and only at the final judgment he will separate the wheat and the tares. It's not by you. I win souls, but they are associated with a body of believers. Are they formed into a church? That is God's purpose.

Because He says it is through the church, however weak it may be numerically or spiritually, it's through that church, however adulterated or infiltrated it may be, through that church his wisdom, manifest wisdom will be made manifest to all principalities and powers. So we need to commit ourselves to this in missions. The church is central in God's missionary purpose and He wants all our missionary efforts to be pointed in this direction when we plant a church and build a church.

5. **Church manifests Kingdom:** Now you may ask, what place does the kingdom of God have in all of this? There is quite a lot of talk about the kingdom of God today. There are many books on missions which talk about the kingdom. But then we must keep the kingdom in the right place. It is the church to which God is committed. The kingdom is the ultimate end. We don't deny the kingdom. But how can the kingdom be made visible without the church? The church is the symbol of the kingdom, the witness of the kingdom, the signpost of the kingdom- The beachhead of the kingdom. It is through the church the signs of the kingdom are manifested to the world. The kingdom is our ultimate goal when Christ will rule over all peoples and nations and the whole earth.

There will be a just and peaceful society established. We work towards that. We don't say it will happen only in the Second Coming and so sit quiet. No, we do all we can for that and we look forward to that. But right now it is the church which manifests the kingdom. So don't talk about the kingdom ignoring the church. This is what is done unfortunately in all ecumenical debates. The church is a casualty. Let's not ignore the kingdom and let's not neglect the church. Both are there, but the church is what God has committed to, as his own agent, as being at the centre of His missionary purpose.

IV. Involving church in missions

Now, how to get the church involved in missions? The Church of South India has in its constitution a beautiful statement. 'Every congregation of the people of God is central to mission in its neighbourhood and to the ends of the earth.' Or in other words, the local church has a mission in its neighbourhood. Your church must be

involved in the area where it is located. There is no point in going somewhere else and doing vocational evangelism, when you're not doing anything in the community where you are. Are you sensitive to the needs of the community? Have you given the Gospel to the community? So there must be mission in the neighbourhood and I tell you the slums in our cities are a great challenge today. They say that by AD 2000 India will have many cities with huge populations and about 50% of these cities will be just slums. If that is so, if our cities are growing at a fast pace, and if we have slums growing at a fast rate, what are we doing in these slums?

It is not mere social work that is needed, but it is evangelism, in these darkened corners of sin and shame that is the challenge. We must not neglect our slums-then to the ends of the earth. Don't be satisfied with merely local evangelism. What are you doing to take the Gospel to those who have not heard it? You are called to send people as missionaries as the Antioch church did. Or you are called to send out those as missionaries like Paul and Barnabas. Paul and Barnabas received support from several churches. God is very particular that local churches must be involved in His missionary work.

V. Para church bodies

There are some people who may say, 'Well para-church missions and para-church agencies are all out of order, they are not found in the Scripture. I want to tell you, they are not out of order, they are not of the devil, and they are a historic necessity. When the church could not carry out its mandate and its mission, God raised up para church agencies, so they came out of God's plan. They do not come out of the devil. Then even in the Scripture in the book of Acts you see the seeds of para church missionary movement. Paul and his missionary companions in Acts 20- he drew them from Thessalonica, he drew them from Asia, from various places, and he travelled along with them. Luke and Titus drew them from various local churches. They were not under any local church authority in their missionary work. They were a team, a group. But they did not ignore the local church. They drew on the local church. The para church mission should not become a substitute for the local church. We are committed to the church in IEM. We will build the church and not build IEM. We will not

compete with the church in any way. No para church mission should compete with the church. We are not substitutes for the church, we work with the church. So the church accepts the para church and the para church accepts the church and we work together.

VI. Paul's strategy

How did Paul do it? Look at Colossians 4:3, 4 he says 'Pray the door of opportunity may be kept open so that I will preach the Gospel clearly.' Then he writes to the Philippian church which he established and he says 'thank you for sending me some gifts, I appreciate it.' then he said to them in Phil. 1:5, 'you are my partners in the Gospel.' then he writes to the Roman church, a church which he never established which he never saw before. He said to them, 'I'm going to come to you because I'm thinking of going to Spain on an evangelistic mission. On the way I'll come to you and I'll spend some time with you, I'll teach you and will receive some blessings from you so you can help me in my mission to Spain (Romans 15:24).' Now why does this man bother about this? Paul should have sat in a corner and written some letters to Germany, USA and Canada and all over the place and received money and carried out his evangelistic work. Is that God's order? No, my brother, if the church in your own country is not involved in your missionary outreach, something is wrong.

In IEM we receive overseas help and we use it only for projects. We have said that if the local churches in India do not support our work we fold up. Our missionaries are supported by our local churches. Even any help that may come in the name of any missionary is used only for the work projects of that missionary. Paul says, 'I can do it alone by myself but I need the Philippian church. It may be a quarrelling church. I will not say you are a quarrelling church and I do not want your help.' He did not say that. To the Colossian church with all of its heresies, he did not say, 'you have enough headaches doctrinally. I do not want your help.' The Roman church he hadn't even seen. He included all these churches, even the Corinthian church which was a thorn to him. Even to them he wrote and said, 'Now look the Macedonians are helping me so much out of their poverty, and you what are you doing?' (II Cor. 8, 9). So he wanted even a carnal church like the Corinthian church to be involved in his mission.

1. Mobilizing church

So the local church must be involved in mission. How can it be involved in its mission in its neighbourhood and to the ends of the earth? The local church cannot survey an area in H.P. and send missionaries and supervise the church. Why? It does not have the missionaries. It does not have the structure. It does not have the personnel. So what can the local church do? It can draw in the help of a para church mission. Be it OM, Every Home Crusade, FMBP, Gospel Recordings or IEM, you have scores of them in this country. Get their help and say to them, 'Look we have some young people who want to go as missionaries to north India, or to central India, to the Andaman Islands or to the Muslim world. We will send them through your mission because we do not have the structure and they will be our missionaries working through you.

We'll support them and let them write to us, let them come and spend their vacation with us so when they come we'll use them to minister to us like Paul and Barnabas did in the church in Antioch.' That is scriptural. The para church agencies say, 'Fine, we exist only to serve the church, so we'll receive your missionaries. Never mind our name. We'll call them your missionaries and we'll see that they are used somewhere and we'll see that you get regular reports and prayer requests and we can work together like this.' Now that is how the local church can be involved in missions to the ends of the earth.

2. Inculcating mission-mindedness

But to make the local church missionary-minded is the responsibility of every believer and primarily the pastor. How is it done? First through instruction, teaching-constant teaching from the pulpit- In the Youth fellowship, in the women's fellowship and in the men's fellowship. Sometimes these fellowships, these departments in our churches can get obsessed with their own set projects and ignore and forget the total programme of God. This is dangerous. They may have their involvement and yet they must be concerned about the total programme of God and the church as a whole. And so through the men's fellowship, the women's fellowship, through the youth fellowship, through the Sunday school and through all

these agencies and then from the pulpit there is constant instruction. That is how missionary vision comes. Missionary education, instruction is a part of it.

Secondly inspiration, that is missionary biography. Also bring missionaries to speak to them personally so that they see that missionaries are of flesh and blood and get to meet them. There are various ways in which inspiration can be given to them. Then information must be given-missionary information through missionary magazines published by various missions. Make them available to your church, have a bulletin board where you put missionary information and statistics. So we educate the whole congregation that way.

You may shed tears, you may agonize in prayer, you may teach and preach and work hard and still you will have only a remnant in every church that will be involved. I am realistic. Don't get discouraged because God spoke to me about this. I said to myself and to the Lord "Lord when will this whole church get involved? 600 people occupy the pews on Sunday mornings and then they empty the pews and go away. But they don't come to missionary meetings or missionary conferences. When it comes to involvement it's only a few men and women.

What can I do? Should I give up?", and the Lord said, 'Look instead of trying to bring the 600 on the fringe inside, start with the nucleus in the centre and try to increase its number.' Do you understand what I'm talking about? Instead of bringing all the 600 from the fringe to the centre, start with the small nucleus at the centre and try to increase its number. Then it becomes an attainable goal and you will not be discouraged. Most of us get discouraged in church work because we have ideals and unattainable goals and then we bump our head against a wall and then sit and don't do anything. Start with attainable goals, start with a nucleus at the centre, and then seek to increase their number. God said that to me and it was a great encouragement to me. I want to pass it on to you. So brothers, sisters, do not give up your responsibility. You are a member of this body of Christ. Fulfill the mission of the head.

20. The Local Church, Key to Missions

If we study the history of missions, the modern missionary movement began with the formation of several missionary societies as para church structures which later became identified with their denominations. This was how the Baptist Missionary Society (Baptists), the London Missionary Society (Congregationalists), the Church Missionary Society and the Society for the propagation of the Gospel (Anglicans) and others were formed. Later there was the formation of the inter-denominational and undenominational faith missions which tried to work with the local churches. Now the local church is increasingly becoming central in missionary thinking and strategizing. This is closer to the biblical pattern. The constitution of the Church of South India states beautifully, "Every congregation of the people of God is basic to mission in its neighbourhood and to the ends of the earth."

Recognizing the importance of the local church in missions the Association of Church Missions Committees was organized in the United States in 1974 to encourage local churches which are involved in missions and to challenge other local churches to be involved in missions. Six hundred churches are members of this Association. Some of them are denominational belonging to the different denominations while others are independent Bible churches.

I was impressed with how seriously these local churches took their missionary responsibility. They have a two-fold goal in their missionary involvement.

I. Goals of Church Involvement

One, to educate the congregation systematically in missions so that the whole congregation is instructed in God's missionary purpose revealed in Scriptures, informed of what God is doing in the world today and of present challenges and opportunities and is involved in fulfilling God's missionary purpose. This involvement is expressed not merely in financial support but also in intelligent intercession and in a sacrificial lifestyle. The goal is for every member of the congregation to be a World Christian.

The term "World Christian" was introduced to the worldwide Church, by that great missionary statesman, Dr. Ralph Winter. The

World Christian is one who accepts personal responsibility for the Great Commission. He lives and acts all the time in the light of the concern that the Gospel must be taken to those who have never heard it. This dominates his lifestyle, determines his values and directs the course of his life. His choices and decisions are made with this concern as the point of reference. When this happens, the whole congregation truly becomes the missionary people of God.

The second goal is to recruit, equip, send and support missionaries. This is a wonderful scriptural pattern we see from Acts 13. How wonderful if we get our missionary candidates sent by local churches after they have been trained, disciplined and proved in the corporate life and witness of the local church!

To carry out this missionary mandate each local church has a strong Missions Committee consisting of deeply dedicated lay people. Often, there is a Missions pastor or a layman who is the chairman of the Missions Committee who provides the leadership to plan the missionary education of the congregation and to coordinate their missionary efforts.

It may be asked, "If the local church plays such an active and detailed role in recruiting, equipping, sending and supporting missionaries, what role does the missionary society have?" This brings us to see an important biblical truth to which we in the IEM are committed. The Church (visibly manifested in the world through the local church) is God's missionary agency in the present age and is central in His missionary purpose. Missionary agencies are only servants of Christ and of His Church. Their goal is to build the Church. A local church is limited in many ways and so it cannot survey missionary needs, open mission fields and administer them.

Here is where the missionary society comes in and functions as a link between the local church and the mission field. That is why IEM has the two objectives, namely, to reach the unreached and to challenge the churches to accept their missionary responsibility. Our promotional work, or State conventions and our publications are geared to fulfill these objectives. We must constantly ask ourselves how effectively we are fulfilling these objectives.

The local church is not to be viewed merely as a milking cow by the missionary societies. Our whole aim should not be merely to get financial support from the local churches. We should evaluate our

programme by asking, "How effective are we in making the local churches which are involved with us the true missionary people of God?"

Basic to the above concern is the great need to impart Spirit-anointed Bible teaching to our congregations. True missionary concern will be the result of understanding God's missionary purpose revealed in the Scriptures. It is not based merely on statistics, slides and stories. It is not enough just to keep on preaching the same missionary messages from a few overworked missionary texts. We should teach God's missionary purpose revealed in the whole Scripture from Genesis to Revelation.

While writing on the importance of the local church in missions, I must be realistic in my assessment of the situation in our country. Only a few local churches in our major denominations in India have the autonomy to carry out their missionary activities. These are usually city churches which have the financial strength to take an independent stand. Others are often stifled by our denominational structures and hierarchy. The local church is the central unit of missions as seen in Scripture. This should be recognized and the local church should be motivated to fulfill its role. Parasitical structures that sap its energy and hinder its missionary activity should be removed and the local church must be given freedom to express its missionary concern.

II. Possibilities to Serve God

How can a local church be involved in missions? Here are some practical steps:

1. Prayer

Our Lord taught His disciples that their immediate response to the missionary needs of the world should be "Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest" (Matthew 9:38). Prayer for the people who need the Gospel, prayer for the missionaries who are working among them and prayer for more missionary recruits is a very vital part of the missionary involvement of the local church. Such prayers would be more meaningful and effective only if fresh prayer information is provided for the church. Special missionary prayer groups may be organized. Or, existing prayer groups or

house groups may be turned into missionary prayer groups. Following the people's approach each missionary prayer group can pray for a particular tribe or people group. Or, there may be prayer groups for Hindus, Muslims, tribals etc.

A third plan is to have each prayer group take a particular geographical area. The different missionary societies as well as the denominational mission board can provide information and requests for prayer to be used by these prayer groups. "The meetings will be more congregation-centred than society-centered, eliminating competition between missions, and giving a much more balanced view of the total Christian endeavour in any country than the present system, under which one is frequently given the mistaken impression that the missionaries of a particular society are the only people there!" (Michael Griffiths, *Cinderella with Amnesia*, P. 152). One local church may have its missionary prayer groups praying for several missions. One missionary prayer group may pray for the work of several missions. No mission needs to monopolize the prayers of any group.

2. Personnel

The missionary involvement of the local church will be more enthusiastic and real if it is involved with individual missionaries. The missionary concern is more real when it is personalized. For this reason, ideally the local churches should be the recruiting ground for para church missions and for denominational mission boards. If the local church sends its own candidates to the mission, its involvement will be even more. It will regard missionary work as its own, as a geographical of its own local evangelistic work. The missionary societies inform the local churches of their urgent needs for missionary personnel and the local churches recruit and commend their candidates to the societies.

This will be a help to the missionary societies because they do not have to rely only on the candidates' applications, certificates and the short personal interview. Those who have known him in the local church situation would be able to judge better whether he is suitable or not. The missionary society can then evaluate his suitability in the light of the place of work and

the type of work he would do. This system will work only if the local church has the spiritual maturity and vision to recognize and encourage potential missionary candidates from among its members.

If the local church is not able to do this, then the missionary society can offer its candidates to the local church for its prayer and financial support. The local church then adopts these missionaries as its own. The missionary receives financial support from the mission as the local church sends it for him to the mission. He is under the supervision and pastoral care of the mission on the mission field. But when he comes on leave, he is with his local church. He can spend a greater part of his vacation in ministering to and being ministered to by his local church. This will refresh him physically and spiritually. This will be a ministry for pastor and congregations – retreading tired missionaries” (Michael Griffiths, *Get involved in Missions*”, P.26).

3. Purse

Paul and his team of missionaries were supported financially by several local churches (2 Cor 8:1, 2, Phil 4: 14-16). In the ministry involvement of the local church money is not central. Money should never be central in missions. Each member of the church must be challenged to place himself unreservedly and fully in the hands of the Lord so that he is available to do His will. This is true missionary consecration, out of which will come the obedience to go as a missionary, burden to intercede for missions and the urge to give liberally for missions. Giving money should not become a substitute for total obedience to God's will. In the missionary convention the Faith Promise plan may be presented and explained but it should not be the central feature of the convention. The main goal of the missionary convention must be to bring men and women to full obedience to God's will so that they fulfill His plan in their lives.

There are many ways in which a local church can give for missions.

- i. Whenever a missionary visits a church, an offering may be taken for his work and given to him.
- ii. When a special appeal is made by a missionary society, a

Sunday is set apart for that Society and an offering is taken and given to it. This, however, does not help the local church to be consistently and sacrificially involved in mission.

- iii. A certain percentage of the church's income is designated for missions. Percentages do not inspire people. There is no personal involvement on the part of the members in this method.
- iv. A particular Sunday is designated once a month or once a year as Missions Sunday and the offerings on that Sunday are given to missions. This method does not give to missions the place it should have in the life of the church.
- v. Missions is indicated in the offering envelopes as one of the beneficiaries of the giving of the members. Each member is free to give or not to give for this item. This does not get at the whole church involved in giving to missions.
- vi. The missionaries who go from the church or those who are adopted by the church are presented to the members and they are challenged to support them fully or partly. The Faith Promise plan can be used for this purpose. The amount needed to support the missionaries is prayerfully set as the goal for the year. Then members are challenged to exercise their faith and pledge the amount which God would have them to give so that the goal is reached by the entire church.

A local church may support several missionaries fully or partly.

21. The Church – God's Masterpiece

If it is true (and it is true) that transformed individuals are monuments of God's grace, it is equally true that the corporate body of Christ, the Church which is God's showpiece is the masterpiece of His redemptive work. "His intent was that now, through the Church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realm, according to His eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ephesians 3:10, 11). A very important part of God's work of salvation is the creation of the Church, its sanctification and its glorification. God is not merely in the business of saving individuals, He is gathering a people for Himself, and through this people, the Church, He wants to work out His purposes in the world. This corporate aspect of our salvation and the working out of our life of obedience and faith in the community of God's people is unique to our Christian faith. As someone has aptly said "For all other religions, you may have just a god and a man but for Christianity you need Jesus Christ and two persons." Christian salvation includes the entire community of the redeemed, and Christian holiness is experienced and expressed in living human relationships. There is no such thing as solitary holiness. The bulk of New Testament teaching has to do with our relationships with each other in the body of Christ.

I. The Advantages of the local church

In the light of this, it is not possible for a believer to grow spiritually unless he recognizes and accepts his place in the body of Christ. It is only in the discipline of living and serving with a local church that Christian discipleship is perfected. There are many young people who get saved but never identify with a local church or assembly. There are no spiritual tramps in God's kingdom. Each one of us must find our spiritual home in a local church. When we have found a local church, with whose doctrines and practices we agree, we must commit ourselves to it and get involved in its life and witness. There is no place for sermon-tasters who change their church affiliation constantly according to the preacher. The discipline that comes through a fellowship of believers is very valuable.

Someone has said that there are only two kinds of people in any local church – the pillars who identify with the church and get involved in its witness and service and the caterpillars that crawl in and out of the church on Sundays without any more involvement. It is not right always to ask, "What am I getting out of my local church?" We must also ask, "What am I doing in and for and through my local church?"

I have mentioned the local church quite a lot. Someone may ask, "Can I not be a part of the universal church, the body of Christ without bothering about the local church which is plagued by nominalism and strife?" The answer is "No". The universal church is visibly and geographically represented by the local churches. It is in the local church that our commitment to the universal church is demonstrated. No local church is perfect as we notice from the teachings of the New Testament. Our Lord Himself said that the wheat and the tares would grow together and the separation will come at the end.

II. Place of Inter-denominational organizations

The problem with many believers is that they are torn between their duty to their local church and their love for an inter-denominational organization which has been a spiritual help to them. In the New Testament it is clearly seen that the local church is central to God's purposes. Where do interdenominational organizations fit in the picture? There are local churches which regard all such organizations as rivals. Also, there are interdenominational organizations which function as substitute churches.

Both are wrong. Ultimately, all ministries and efforts should lead to church planting and church building. No organization should exist for itself. An inter-denominational organization is like the scaffolding that is erected to help in the building work. Once the building is completed, the scaffolding is dismantled. It does not become the centre of attention. It may be necessary for some inter-denominational organizations to dismantle themselves once the churches have taken up the work for which God raised them up. This takes courage and selflessness.

In the planning of their programmes and activities, no inter-denominational organization should compete with the local churches or take away the people from the churches. At the same

time, the local churches should shed off their suspicions and jealousies and accept the ministry of the inter-denominational organizations for their own benefit and up building. The organization may fulfill a ministry to the church which the church itself is not able to do due to lack of resources and personnel.

What a privilege it is to belong to the Church – God's masterpiece!

22. On Involving Local Church in Missions

The local church has a key role in missions. We find this in the New Testament. How can a local church be made missionary minded?

The local church should not consider missions a hobby or a pastime in which to be involved occasionally when it can spare some time. It is not just a once-a-year preoccupation characterized by an annual Missions Sunday or Missionary Conference. Nor should it be regarded as one of the many interests and departments of the church. Mission is not an option, it is a mandate. The whole church must be occupied with it.

Is this just an unattainable ideal or is it possible to realize this in the life of a local church? One can think of some outstanding local churches which have put missions at the centre of some of their programmes. People's Church in Toronto, Canada; Park Street Church, Boston USA; Grace Gospel Church, Manila, Philippines; St Paul's Church (Church of South India), Madras and Richmond Town Methodist Church, Bangalore are a few examples. It would be an interesting study to find out what percentage of the membership in these churches is involved in their missions programme.

When I began my pastoral career in Richmond Town Methodist Church, Bangalore, the Lord put the burden on my heart to make it a missionary-minded church. But it was a constant frustration to see only a small nucleus involved in the missions' programme of the church, while the majority who came to our Sunday services was mere spectators on the fringe. I despaired of ever being able to get the entire membership involved in missions. Then the Lord showed me an attainable goal. If I could see the involved nucleus become an ever-growing nucleus, with more and more people being added to them every year-that would be the right goal.

I. Instruction

Our task is to lead the whole church to make it available to the Lord of missions. This is not a structural problem, but a spiritual one. "The missionary problem is a personal one... Only spiritual men, and a church in which spiritual men have influence, are capable of rightly carrying out Christ's commands." (Andrew Murray).

The secret of this deepening of the spiritual life in a local church is the Spirit anointed ministry of the Word of God. There must be teaching and preaching which leads each member to consecrate himself fully to the Lord for the fulfillment of His purpose. The missionary responsibility of each believer must be clearly set forth from the Word of God. Thus there must be consistent education of the entire congregation regarding their missionary responsibility. It is not enough just to have an annual missionary convention or to expose the congregation to occasional visiting missionaries. Before the Antioch church sent out Paul and Barnabas as its missionaries, there was a Spirit-anointed preaching and teaching ministry in that congregation, note the reference to "prophets and teachers" in Acts 13:1.

1. The pastor

The pastor is the key in this programme of missionary education in the local church. He provides the leadership and the ministry. "To the pastor belong the privilege and the responsibility of solving the foreign missionary problem... the pastor of the smallest church has the power to make his influence felt around the world. No pastor is worthy of his office who does not put himself into sympathy with the magnificent breadth of the great commission, and draw inspiration and zeal from its world wide sweep." (Andrew Murray)

The pastor must be convinced of the following four principles:

- a) Mission is the chief end of the Church.
- b) The chief end of the ministry is to guide the Church in this work and equip her for it.
- c) The chief end of preaching to a congregation ought to be to train it to help to fulfill its destiny.
- d) The chief aim of every minister in this connection ought to be to fit himself thoroughly for this work.

2. Church-related organizations

In most local churches there are separate organizations for children, boys, girls, young people, men and women. Through such organizations the church members of various age groups can be made aware of their missionary responsibility and trained for service. Out of these organizations can come an endless line

of dedicated workers for missionary service. Unfortunately in many churches these organizations flounder around without any sense of direction, without proper goals or leadership.

3. **Special efforts**

Besides the avenues of regular ministry listed above, the local church should have an annual missionary convention where there is solid teaching on missions from the Scripture. Mission Sundays can be observed once in a month or once in three months. Special seminars can be conducted on topics of missionary interest featuring visiting missionaries and mission leaders.

II. **INSPIRATION**

The church in Antioch is a good example for a missionary church. We see that it was an instructed church because of the prophets and teachers who are mentioned in Acts 13:1. This church also worshipped, fasted and prayed (Acts 13:2, 3). A worldly church which does not know self-denial or total consecration cannot have sincere missionary concern.

1. **Prayer**

The local church must be taught and trained in the ministry of missionary intercession. It must know how to pray for the needs of the lost world, for those who have not heard the Gospel and for the missionaries working among them. It must know how to "bind the strong man and plunder the goods from his house" (Matt. 12:29). The practice of fasting and prayer is a good preparation for missionary ventures. I know of at least two Indian missions which were born in such an atmosphere.

2. **Faith and consecration**

A missionary church must be a church of faith and consecration to the Lord. God has used the Faith Promise system of giving to teach many local churches great lessons in faith. In this plan the members are taught to pledge the amount of money which the Lord would lay upon their hearts though they may not have this money or have immediate access to it. Then they trust the Lord to provide this money and give it to missions as He provides. The teaching of missionary biographies can inspire great faith and total abandonment to do His will in the life of the members of the local church. I personally owe a great deal to the influence of

missionary biographies in my life. It was the life of David Brainerd that influenced Henry Martyn. Missionary biographies can play an important part in the missionary education of a local church. Biographies of great Indian missionaries like Sadhu Sunder Singh, Bishop V.S. Azariah and others can be of great value.

3. Pentecost

"The Pentecostal commission can only be carried out by a Pentecostal church, in Pentecostal power." The term "Pentecostal church" does not refer to any denomination. It simply means a church that is Spirit-filled and Spirit-controlled, a church which is sensitive to obey the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit prepared Christ to offer Himself as a sacrifice to fulfill God's purpose. The same Spirit should prepare the church and the believer to fulfill God's redemptive purposes today.

III. Information

Missionary information is as much a part of the missionary education of the local church as instruction and inspiration are. Jesus said, "Lift up your eyes, and see how the fields are already white for harvest" (John 4:35). This is a command to be acquainted with missionary needs, a command to be informed. Missionary ignorance is one of the major hindrances to the missionary involvement of the members of a congregation. Many do not know the missionary needs of the world. How can this information be provided?

1. Missionary literature

Missionary magazines, books and pamphlets describing the activities of various missions and the needs of particular areas or people groups should be made available to the whole congregation. These can be circulated through the church library. The pastor can call attention to them by referring to them or quoting from them frequently in the pulpit.

2. Missionary bulletin board

The church should have a bulletin board prominently displayed on which maps, magazines and newspaper cuttings of missionary interest, pictures of missionaries and different peoples of the world, factual information about the unreached, etc. can be pasted. This information should be fresh and should be frequently replenished.

3. **Missionary visitors**

Every effort should be made to invite missionaries and mission leaders and expose them to the congregation. They should be asked to give fresh missionary information to the church. The pastor can keep this information before the congregation every Sunday by mentioning it in his pastoral prayer.

V. Missions and the Holy Spirit

23. Pentecost, Purity plus Power

Taken from Outreach, May 1983

I. Meaning of Pentecost

The word "Pentecost" means "fiftieth" in Greek. The feast of Weeks mentioned in Lev.23 and Deut.16 was also called the feast of Pentecost because it fell on the fiftieth day after Passover. It marked the beginning of the wheat harvest in ancient Israel. It was on Pentecost, the fiftieth day after Jesus' resurrection, that the Holy Spirit came upon those gathered in the upper room.

Our Lord had told the disciples, "I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high" (Luke. 24:49). Before He was taken up to heaven, again He told them, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you" (Acts 1:8). The eleven disciples along with women who were ministering to Jesus when He was on earth were there. Mary, the mother of Jesus, and his brothers were there. They were "constantly at prayer" in the upper room (Acts 1:13, 14). That is when the Holy Spirit came upon them. Many things happened on that occasion.

Features of the Infilling of the Spirit

1. There was the "sound like the blowing of a violent wind." There were "what seemed to be tongues of fire." They spoke in other languages. But, the central fact is "all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit." Besides this occasion, there are five other distinct events when the Holy Spirit came upon people. Each one is different from the other in the outward signs.
2. In Acts 4:31; 8:17 and 9:17-19 there is no sign of speaking in tongues.
3. In Acts 2:4, 10:44, 46 and 19:6, they spoke in tongues when they were filled with the Spirit.
4. In Acts 2:4, they spoke in languages which were recognized by those who heard them. We do not read this in Acts 10 and 19.
5. In Acts 19, speaking in tongues was accompanied by prophecy. Thus, we see that the signs varied in each case.

6. When Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit, "something like scales fell" from his eyes (Acts 9:18). How ridiculous it would be to insist that if you are filled with the Holy Spirit scales must fall from your eyes!
7. In Acts 10:44, 46, they were all filled with the Holy Spirit even before they were baptized. How unscriptural is it to insist that a person must be baptized in a certain way before he is filled with the Spirit! **There is no particular pattern given in the New Testament by which a person must be filled with the Spirit.**
8. The Samaritans and the apostle Paul did not speak in tongues when they were filled with the Spirit. Speaking in tongues is one of the gifts of the Spirit. Not all may have it (1 Cor. 12:30). The Holy Spirit distributes the gifts of the Spirit according to His sovereign will. Speaking in tongues is not a sign of spiritual maturity or depth as seen from the experience of the Corinthian Christians. It is possible to be filled with the Spirit and yet not speak in tongues.

Being "filled with the Spirit" is an experience all Christians must have.

9. If you are filled with the Spirit there will be outward evidences. There will be victory, freedom and power in life and service.

What happened to the disciples when they were filled with the Spirit? We have already seen that there were a few signs which may be called "fringe phenomena." But, the central fact is this:

10. When they were filled with the Holy Spirit, they had PURITY and POWER!

II. Characteristics

1. Purity from the spirit

Peter, in reporting to the Church Council in Jerusalem about what had happened in the upper room and in the home of Cornelius, said, "God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them (the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius) by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us (the Jewish disciples in the upper room). He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:8, 9). He did not mention the sound of the wind, the tongues of fire or the speaking in tongues. These were not central. However, in both cases when they were filled with the Holy Spirit, their hearts

were purified.

2. When a person accepts Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour, the Holy Spirit comes into his heart (Ephesians 1:13). But the sinful nature is still there. That is why we fall into sin even after we are born again. We must confess these failures, turn from them and surrender fully to the Holy Spirit and ask Him to fill us. Then He takes control of our lives and purifies us and keeps us pure. That is why He is called the Holy Spirit - the Spirit of Holiness. To keep pure, we must walk in the Spirit; that is, listen to Him and obey Him daily (Galatians 5:16, 17).

3. Power from the spirit

Everyone likes to have power. It is common to hear believers asking for power. The Lord does not hand over power in packets! Power belongs to Him (Psalm 62:11). He will not hand this over to you. As we are filled with the Holy Spirit His power works in us and through us. Power still belongs to Him, and it flows through us. We do not become **storage tanks of power**. We are only **channels of power**.

4. Relationship with the Spirit

His power will help you to accomplish only what His purpose intends for you to accomplish. A person whom God wants to be a winsome, prayerful housewife will not necessarily become a platform speaker if she receives the power of the Holy Spirit. The power of the Holy Spirit will not make everyone a preacher, a miracle worker, a healer, or a leader. He will give you the power to do what God wants you to do in His plan for your life. It is power of victorious living and fruitful service.

To be filled with the Spirit is to be possessed and controlled by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a person, and you are a **person**. How can one person fill another? If one person controls the thoughts, affections and actions of another and directs the course of his life, we say that he is filled with the other person. This is the relationship the Holy Spirit wants to have with us. Are you filled with the Holy Spirit?

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24. Into the Holiest

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus... let us draw near..." (Heb. 10:19, 22).

How real is God to you? These are days in which we may do well to ask ourselves this question and seek to find an honest answer. We live in the day of the so-called "new theology" and "new morality." Men make gods not with their hands as they did long ago but with their minds. Attempts are made to secularize God to pander to the whims and fancies of the so-called "secular man." The prophets of the "new theology" like Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Paul Tillich and Bishop Robinson believe that God is being "edged out" of modern life by science and technology and so there must be a re-interpretation of God to suit the modern man. They contend that the very word "God" must be replaced by some expression like "the ground of our being."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was brought up in good Lutheran tradition and even as a young theologian, his then sincere piety and devotion to God breathed through his books. In 1943, he was imprisoned because of his opposition to Hitler's regime. It was in the prison that his thought underwent a change. His Letters and Papers from Prison show that he was beginning to formulate revolutionary ideas about God which took him away from the Scriptures. He wrote, "God is teaching us that we must live as men who can get along very well without him." What was the cause for this change? Perhaps, his consciousness of God became less and less real until he had to make a god of his own. The Scripture says, "...if you lose your freshness in the land and deprave yourselves by carving an idol..." (Deut. 4:25, Moffat). When a man loses his touch with God, the next step is to carve a god of his own to satisfy his conscience.

Thus it is very necessary that we live as close to God as possible and know without any doubt that He is real to us. In a world which questions the existence of God or speculates about Him, how sure we must be of the reality of His presence with us! These are days in which the Church needs prophets and not mere scribes. Prophets are those who have drawn near to the very presence of God and have gazed on Him with spiritual insight and go out to speak to the world in His Name. The scribe has his place but where are the prophets? The

informed mind is important but where is the burning heart?

Among the vast number of people who hear the name of Christ, generally there are **three groups**.

I. Outside the Circle

First there are those who stand outside the circle. They have never had a personal experience with the Lord. Their knowledge of Him is second-hand and abstract. Their consciousness of Him is vague and marginal. There are times when they feel that He is on their side, answering their prayers and meeting their needs. At other times, they know that he is a stranger to them. Their ways are not His ways nor are their thoughts His thoughts. They are like the vast number of Israelites who stood in the court of the Tabernacle but never went into the Holy place or even as the Gentiles who stood in the outer court. They are aliens and strangers.

To many of them God is an entity for the emergency. Once, a ship which was out in the ocean was caught in a severe storm. The sailors began to fear for their lives and did what they could do to save the ship. Then some of them began to think about God and wanted His help. There was no one who knew how to pray. Finally an old sailor came forward and summing up his courage, he began to pray. This is what he said, "Dear God, I haven't asked you for anything in over fifteen years; and if You will save us from this storm, I promise I won't bother you again for another fifteen!" You may laugh at this. But how many of us treat God just like that? We live as though He does not exist. But when there is a calamity or a crisis, we run to Him and cry for His help.

What is it that keeps a person outside the circle from enjoying the conscious presence of God? It is sin. God is at the margin and sin is at the centre. Sin acts as the barrier and keeps us outside. When the sinner repents and puts his faith in Christ or when he is converted, he enters the circle. As one psychologist puts it, there is the "birth of a new dominant affection by which the God-consciousness hitherto marginal and vague becomes focal and dynamic." Prayer becomes meaningful and the Bible becomes a living Book. Now, he is in the Holy place.

II. Inside the Circle

The second group of people is those who are inside the circle, in the Holy place of the Tabernacle and yet, they are only on the margin and not at the centre. They enjoy the privileges of the Holy place. There is the Showbread Table. They do read their Bibles and feed upon the Word of God. There is the Golden Candlestick. They receive guidance from God. As children of God, they are led by the Spirit of God (Rom. 8:16). There is the Altar of incense. They do pray and receive answers for their prayers. But they are not in the Holiest. There is a veil between them and the Holiest.

They do not live in a place of constant, unbroken fellowship with God. Their fellowship with God is often marred by self-willed rebellion, failure and spiritual defeat. They have an up-and-down spiritual experience. There are times when they live at the height of spiritual victory and fellowship with God. These are followed by times when they sink as low as they can into sin and unbelief. At such times, God is not real to them. Then they either put on a show of godliness or they sink in despair. Is this God's will for a Christian? Certainly not.

God wants every believer to live as close to Him as it is humanly possible. A saint of God prayed saying "Lord, make me as holy as a redeemed child of Thine can be on this side of eternity." Should not this be the yearning of a believer? God is calling us to draw near into the Holiest and there live with Him a life of unbroken fellowship and victory. Dr. A. W. Tozer says, "God wills that we should push on into His presence and live our whole life there." It is not just an occasional glimpse of His presence but a constant living in that presence. It is a life in which we can say like the Psalmist "I have set the Lord always before me" (Ps. 16:8).

III. The Centre Circle Holiest

The third group is those who have entered into the Holiest and live there. They are the ones who are the Lord's prophets. To them every day brings its wonders. Life is one of constant wonder. There is no staleness or sourness. They have a touch of eternity though they live in time. In the midst of this troubled

world, they have a serenity which is other-worldly. They are natural and human and yet "supernaturally natural." They have spiritual authority and the world stops to listen to them. They speak of the things they have seen and learned in the presence of God and the world marvels at their wisdom. They have an intense passion and love for Christ which the world cannot understand. To them God is as real as their own being.

Now, how is this life in the Holiest possible? In the New Testament, Jesus calls us to come unto Him and that involves **decision**. Then He calls us to come after Him and that is **discipleship**. He also calls us to draw near and that implies deeper **dedication**. On the negative side, we are asked to "draw near having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb. 10:22). The heart stands for the centre of the personality including affections, attitudes and motives. Phillips translates it as the "inmost soul." A cleansing of this inner life is needed. Defilement in our affections, motives and attitudes keeps us from a constant consciousness of God's presence. As long as sin rules and controls our inner life, there can be no constant victory.

The condition for cleansing is confession of the defilement and a turning away from it (1 John 1:9). Then there is the need for purification of the body also. In Romans 6:13 we are asked to yield our "members" to God. How often it is the impure eye or ear or tongue which keeps us from the Holiest place! The eye, the ear, the tongue and every member of the body must be cleansed and controlled by the Holy Spirit. The life in the Holiest is to be lived not only with cleansed hearts but also with purified bodies. The inward life as well as the outward life must conform to God's standard of holiness in order that we may live in the Holiest.

On the positive side, we must draw near "with a true heart in full assurance of faith." The true heart is a sincere heart, a heart in which there is no hypocrisy or unsundered part. It is also an undivided heart. It is wholly given to God. The conflict between self-will and Christ has been resolved and Christ is on the throne. As S. D. Gordon says, "If Christ is on the Throne of the heart, self is on the Cross; if self is on the throne, Christ must be on the

Cross." A heart where Christ rules on the throne is a united heart and it is a true heart. Entire consecration must be followed by complete trust in God's faithfulness to accept the offering. This is "full assurance of faith." The word faith is interpreted by Souter to indicate "that leaning of the entire human personality on God in absolute trust and confidence in His power, wisdom and goodness."

Shall we then enter into the Holiest and "live our whole life there?" Having therefore brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus... Let us draw near..." May this be our prayer: "Lord, we would draw near in full assurance of faith. We would dwell with Thee in daily experience here on this earth so that we may be accustomed to the glory when we enter Thy heaven to dwell with Thee there."

25. Purity through the Spirit

Taken from 'The More Excellent Way' (digest of Christian Holiness) edited by Theodore & Esther Williams, published by the India Holiness Association, 1986.

Any religious person who takes the moral demands of his religion seriously will find that he is involved in a losing battle. Religion tells us what we should do and what we should not do, but it does not tell us how we can do what we should do and avoid what we should not do. In his battle against evil, both without and within, man finds that he is always the loser. This is because of his innate sinfulness. Scripture affirms this. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately corrupt; who can understand it?" (Jeremiah 17:9). "From within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, fornication, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, foolishness" (Mark 7:21, 22). Even if a man is able to maintain moral standards in outward actions, he fails in his inner life of attitudes and thoughts.

I. The Battle for Purity – In the unregenerate man

The sense of sin may vary in individuals according to their religious background and their knowledge of the standards of a holy God. Among Hindus and Muslims there is no adequate concept of sin because there is no adequate concept of the moral nature of God. But those non-Christians who have become acquainted with the Bible through Christian schools or other influences do have a vague concept of the moral demands of God. Where the sense of sin is quickened by knowledge of the standards and requirements of a holy God, the battle for purity is intense.

God gave His commandments and laws to the people of Israel to help them to be a holy people. But their story was one of failure. They were a "sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, sons who deal corruptly!" (Isaiah 1:4). They rebelled against God and disobeyed Him constantly. When He sent His prophets to rebuke them and warn them, they stubbornly refused to listen to them. Even when they did seem to repent, it was superficial and temporary. Religious laws and commandments could show them the way but could not give them the power for purity.

Then, God promised the new covenant. He said, "I will sprinkle

clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you... And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances" (Ezekiel 36: 25, 27).

In John 4 we read about the Samaritan woman. Did you ever notice how religious she was? She knew the **religious traditions** of her people. She was proud of the well that her forefather Jacob gave to them (John 4:12). She knew the **religious controversies** of her day. She said to Jesus, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain; and you say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship" (John 4: 19, 20). The Samaritans had built a temple in Mount Gerizim in rivalry to the Jewish temple in Jerusalem and were worshipping there. But the Jews insisted that the true place of worship was the temple in Jerusalem.

She also knew the **religious aspirations** of her race. She said, "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ); when he comes, he will show us all things" (John 4:25). Certainly this woman was religious but she was immoral. She had lived with five husbands and it seems that she had discarded them one after another. Now she was living with a man to whom she was not legally married. Her religion did not help her to be pure. She had religious knowledge but no experience of purity.

How many people call themselves Christians, go regularly to church and observe all the traditions and practices of the Christian religion and yet live in sin! They try to live good lives and then give up because they are always defeated. When they hear the sermon or come to the communion table, they feel terribly guilty but afterwards they settle back in their lives of sin and disobedience. They do not know the way of purity.

Jesus offered to the Samaritan woman living water. He said to her, "Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:14). Water is the symbol of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of John as we see in John 7:39. So Jesus was offering to her the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. That is the answer to the moral and spiritual quest of a religious person who does not know the way of purity. There is only one person who can live the Christian life and that is the Holy Spirit living in us. We cannot be

Christians by our own determination or effort.

When we repent of our sins and receive Christ into our lives as our Saviour, the Holy Spirit comes to indwell us. He changes us. "He saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness but in virtue of his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5). The new life that the Holy Spirit has implanted in us is a life of holiness and purity.

II. The Battle for purity – in the regenerate man

The battle for purity is not over once a person is born again. It continues even in the regenerate man. The Holy Spirit who has come into the life of the believer to dwell in him gives him a new nature and this is the basis of a new life, a life of purity. But the old sinful nature is still in him causing him to stumble and sin. There are two centres in his being, the new nature of the Spirit and the old nature of sin. Some of his choices and desires are centred in the spiritual nature while others are centred in the sinful nature. That is why sometimes he walks in conscious victory and in the sunshine of God's presence and other times he walks in the gloom of failure and defeat. He thinks, says and does things which he regrets later. However much he resolves not to do those things, he fails and does the same things again.

David was aware of this inward flaw in him after he sinned with Bathsheba. His prayer in Psalm 51 was not for forgiveness but for inward purity. He had already received forgiveness but was now conscious of his need of inner cleansing. He prayed, "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart" (Psalm 51:6). David knew that God discerned our secret sympathy with sin, our thoughts and motives. He can see the inner falseness. So he prayed, "Purge me... wash me... fill me..." (Psalm 51:7, 8). He asked for a clean heart, a steadfast spirit, a willing (an enthusiastic) spirit and the Holy Spirit (Psalm 51:10-12).

The apostle Paul described his battle for purity in his letter to the Romans. He described the conflict in Romans 7:14, 15, 19, and 23. "I am carnal, sold under sin. I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate... I do not do the thing I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do.... I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members."

Paul was a believer because he wrote, "I delight in the law of God, in my inmost self" (Romans 7:22). Yet, he discovered that he was bound by his sinful nature. He had two centres in his life, the sinful nature and the spiritual nature and these were contrary to one another. "The desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would" (Galatians 5:17).

A young man who was very gifted and full of zeal enrolled himself in a Bible school to equip himself to serve the Lord. On his way to the Bible school, he lost his temper with one of his fellow passengers in the train and had a fight. All other passengers observed this and he knew that he had lost his testimony before them. Within a few months in Bible school, he lost his temper several times with fellow students, with the staff and with the helpers. He would regret what he had done and be very much broken. But the next moment he would do the same thing. It was then that he realized his need of a deeper work of grace which would give him victory over this temper.

III. Purity Obtained

When we discover our defeat and defilement, the natural tendency is to go about trying to overcome it by our own resolutions and efforts. But purity is God's gift to us. It is obtained and not attained. That is why David asked for a clean heart in Psalm 51. He asked God to purify him. Praying for His disciples our Lord said to His Father, "Sanctify them in the truth; thy word is truth" (John 17:17). Because purity is God's gift, it is given by grace and received by faith. In the intensity of his conflict with sin Paul cried out, "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Romans 7:24). In the very next verse he said, "Thanks be to our God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" The secret of the victory is in Christ. There is no solution to the problem of sin outside of Christ and His redemptive work. We receive purity because of the work of Christ on the Cross. "Christ loved the Church and having cleansed her by the washing of water with the Word, that He might present the Church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish." (Ephesians 5:25-27).

If the basis of purity is the Cross of Christ, the means through

which purity is communicated is the purity in the believer's life and the infilling Spirit makes that purity flourish and invade every area of his life by cleansing him and giving him victory over his sinful nature. That is why Paul wrote, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has **set me free** from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2). Again in Romans 8:13 he wrote, "If you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you **put to death** the deeds of the body you will live." Note the words "set me free" and "put to death" in these verses. They speak of a decisive deliverance.

The "law of sin and death" is the principle of sin that is at work in us due to our sinful nature. "The body" mentioned in Romans 8:13 is not the physical body but the sinful nature. It is the Holy Spirit who sets us free by putting to death the sinful nature. This happens in a decisive manner when we repent from all known sin, acknowledge the bondage of our sinful nature and yield ourselves completely to the Holy Spirit and ask Him to cleanse us and fill us. Then the Holy Spirit cleanses us, puts to death our sinful nature and sets us free.

In his useful book "The Spirit of Holiness" Dr Everett Cattell describes this experience very clearly. If you take a sheet of paper and hold a horse shoe magnet under it and place iron filings on top of it, the iron filings will quickly group themselves in two piles around the two poles of the magnet. In the same way there are two poles in the believer. One is the new spiritual nature which the Holy Spirit has created and the other is the old sinful nature. His decisions, choices, motives, desires and attitudes group themselves around these two poles. Sometimes he is under the control of one and at other times he is under the control of the other. There is a battle for purity raging in his soul. When he yields total control to the Holy Spirit, He creates one pole, one centre. He is integrated within and his life is controlled by the Spirit. This is the "cleansing", "putting to death" or "setting free" described in the Bible.

When Peter described the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the believers in the upper room on the day of Pentecost and later in the house of Cornelius, he said, "He made no distinction between us and them, but cleansed their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:9). Note the word "cleansed" in this verse.

This experience of total consecration to God's will and cleansing by the Holy Spirit is essential for every believer if he desires purity.

Rev. Selwyn Hughes, well-known speaker and author in England describes how he received power through the Spirit. Troubled by his inward sinfulness and tired of his inward defilement and defeat, he cried one night to the Lord, "Lord, reach deep inside me and make me truly clean." He describes what happened.

"Something wonderful took place in my inner being - not so much an invasion of power as an invasion of purity. It did not result, I found, in placing me beyond the possibility of a carnal thought, a stab of pride, a trace of envy, but it meant that from that moment to this, I have been more conscious of the Holy Spirit's presence than I have been of sin's presence. Evil was not eradicated in me, as some proponents of holiness believe, but I found that the eagerness for it had gone, the appetite for it was brought under control and the hunger for it was no longer a clamour." We do not say that sin is eradicated because sin is not a substance. It has to do with our will and our relationship to God and man. It is more Scriptural to use the words "cleanse", "set free" and "put to death".

IV. Purity Maintained

Our hearts are cleansed and filled with the Holy Spirit in a decisive experience. The pattern of this experience may vary from person to person but the fact is the same. It may not be a dramatic experience in some while in others it may be an overwhelming experience. There are some who emphasize only the crisis and forget that there is a growth in holiness while others emphasize only the growth and ignore that there must be a decisive yielding and cleansing before there can be growth. The Holy Spirit must have complete, unhindered control and access in our lives before His holiness can be communicated to every part of our lives. The resistance and rebellion of the sinful nature must be decisively broken and put away before purity can pervade.

After this decisive surrender and cleansing, we must grow in holiness. Purity obtained must be maintained. Paul writes, "Walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh." "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit" (Galatians 5:16, 25). The word "walk" is a military term meaning "keep in step". It is used to describe the soldiers keeping in step with each other as they march. After we are filled with the Spirit, we must walk in harmony with the

Spirit, heeding his restraints and constraints. What if we sin and yield to temptation? Is there no possibility of sin just because we have obtained purity? As long as we are in this life, the possibility of sin is there. Notice the words of John. "My little children, I am writing this to you so that you may not sin; but if any one does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1).

We do not have to sin but if we do sin, we must go to Jesus Christ who is the propitiation for our sins. In the sanctified life, if sin does enter because we have yielded to temptation, we must call it sin, repent from it, confess it to our Lord and receive His forgiveness and cleansing. This is walking in the light. "If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

V. Conformed to His Image

As we walk in continued obedience to the Holy Spirit, He transforms us progressively into the likeness of Christ. "We all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit" (II Corinthians 3:18). He uses all the circumstances of our life, whether favourable or adverse, to conform us to the image of Christ. "We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son..." (Romans 8:28, 29). The good that God works in us is conformity to the image of His Son. As we maintain the life of purity by walking in the light and in the Spirit, the Holy Spirit goes on transforming us into the likeness of Christ. So when Christ appears to us at the end of the age, we shall be like Him. "We know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2). That is the goal towards which we are moving. What an adventure! What an expectation!

VI. Mission and Finance

26. Finance and Missions

Does money matter in missions? Can poor Christians and the churches from the poorer countries be involved in world missions? The answer is an emphatic "Yes" to both these questions. The Bible does talk about money. Jesus spoke about the wise use of money in His parables. Paul wrote and asked Christians to share financially in his missionary labours. Money does have a part in missions but it is not central. We do not plan our ministry work around the availability or the non-availability of money.

I. Biblical Principles

What are some of the biblical principles involved in the use of money in missions?

1. Missionary concern and involvement are not based on affluence. Missions flowed from the have nots to the haves in the early days of the Church. Acts 11:19 says, "Those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen travelled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message" to the Jews and Greeks and as a result the Church in Antioch was started. These were "informal" missionaries from the Church in Jerusalem. Later, we also see that the church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch. Certainly the Church in Jerusalem was poorer than the church in Antioch. When there was a famine in Judea and Jerusalem, the church in Antioch sent help to the Christians there.
2. Giving money for missions is not a sentimental act when the donors are moved emotionally at the impact of a story they hear or an audio visual presentation they see. It must be the result of a consistent commitment to missions. It must come out of their sense of stewardship and as an expression of their missionary involvement. The Christians in the Antioch Church were taught by Paul and Barnabas for a period of one year and they came to be known as Disciples. As a mark of their discipleship, each one gave "according to their ability" when they heard about the famine which the Christians in Judaea were going through.

3. The basic requirement for missionary involvement is a total consecration of the person and all that he has to the Lord. It is out of this consecration that the details of his involvement in missions are worked out. Giving is a part of that involvement. Writing to the Christians in Macedonia Paul said, "They gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own free will....but first they gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God" (II Corinthians 8:3, 5). Commitment to the Lord and to people must precede any meaningful involvement in missions including giving money.
4. Missionary giving is not promoted by high pressure business tactics. To focus the entire attention of the people in a Missions Conference on the Faith Promise pledges whipping up their fervor does not seem to be right. On the other hand, there must be consistent preaching and teaching of the Word of God leading people to total consecration to God's purpose and to accept their missionary responsibility. Out of this should come their missionary giving.
5. Missionary giving should not be conditioned by the affluence or poverty of a congregation or an individual Christian. We note in II Corinthians 8:3 that the Macedonian Christians "gave beyond their means". In the Antioch church every disciple gave "according to his ability" (Acts 11:29). The giving was not conditioned on their affluence or poverty.

II. Biblical Patterns

1. The "informal" missionaries who were responsible for the founding of the Antioch church must have had their own means of support as they travelled and proclaimed the Gospel (Acts 11:19).
2. The Antioch Church sent Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:3, 4) and must have supported them. After his first and second missionary journeys Paul returned to the church and spent days with them. He reported to them what God had done through him and his team mate (Acts 14:27, 28; 18:22, 23).
3. Paul developed a missionary team to travel with him (Acts 20:4). These men came from several local churches. Those churches might have had a share in supporting them and Paul. Paul

received help from the Church in Philippi. He mentions their partnership in the Gospel (Philippians 1:5; 4:15-18). Other churches in Macedonia also helped him (II Corinthians 8:1-3). He was urging the Church in Corinth to do the same (II Corinthians 8:6, 7)

He wanted to visit the Church in Rome and minister to them spiritually so that they could help him in his missionary work in Spain (Romans 1:11-13; 15:24). The biblical principle is that we must minister to churches spiritually before we expect them to support us in our missionary work. Missionary societies should not look upon churches merely as milking cows for missions but should seek to minister to them. Paul emphasized this principle in Romans 15:27. The one who ministers spiritually is entitled to share materially in the blessing of the one who receives the ministry.

4. Paul earned his own living in some places and on some occasions through his tent making. See Acts 18:2, 20:34, II Thessalonians 3:7-9. He did this because of his financial needs and also to be an example to the believers. In Ephesus many religious teachers traded their beliefs and lectures for money. So he established his testimony by working with his own hands.

III. Contemporary Patterns

1. An inter-denominational missionary society offers a missionary to a local church for its adoption and support. The missionary may not be a member of that church. But he will keep in touch with that church giving information and prayer requests regularly. When he comes on leave, he will spend some time with the church. This is done in the Indian Evangelical Mission.
2. Prayer band consisting of Christians from various churches adopt missionaries for their prayer and financial support. This method is followed by the Friends Missionary Prayer Band and the Indian Evangelical Mission in India.
3. In South India several joint families adopt a missionary family for their support. When the families get together, they also invite the missionary to report about his work and have fellowship with them. This is in keeping with the cultural pattern of joint family celebrations.

4. Missionary giving can be in kind. In North Eastern India a house wife sets apart a handful of rice for missions every time she cooks rice for her family. In some villages in South India a family sets apart a hen for missions and all the eggs laid by that hen are sold and the money given for missions. In the same way a mango tree or a coconut tree may be set apart for missions.

In Irian Jaya the Dani tribe sent out missionaries to other tribes and other islands. Once or twice a year the Christians from several churches came together for an "offering day" bringing their offerings mostly in kind. These were auctioned and the money was used for missionary work. Not much cash was in circulation among the Dani people and so they grew vegetables and fruits to sell and have money for missions. They grew peanuts and the income from peanuts financed most of their missionary outreach.

5. As businessmen a few have entered some closed countries and are witnessing for the Lord supporting themselves. Islam spread in South East Asia in the early days through Arab traders and Indian merchants.

In all the above models, we see a healthy freedom and flexibility.

There is no particular rigid financial structure or pattern for supporting missions. The traditional pattern of sending a missionary with full support guaranteed is not the only divinely ordained pattern. We should be open to the Holy Spirit to lead us in new ways.

The Lord who gave us the Great Commission will also give us the resources to obey it.

VII. Missions and prayer

27. The Kingdom Prayer

Addressed to God, Yields to God, Exalts God

It is called the Lord's Prayer because our Lord taught this prayer. It is called the Family prayer because it has the personal pronouns in the plural – it is to be prayed by those who belong to God's family. The words 'I', 'Me' and 'My' never occur in this prayer. Perhaps it is more appropriate to call it the disciples' prayer. It is not a child's prayer as we commonly take it to be. Only one who is committed to Christ personally can pray this.

It is repeated mechanically without realizing its meaning. The only prayer some people can pray is this prayer. On the other hand there are those who would never use it. We must remember that it is a model prayer. It can be used. In fact all our prayers can be based on this pattern. (III.) Praying and yawning. **God-centred**. There are six petitions. The first three have to do with God's name, His kingdom and His will. His name must be hallowed, His Kingdom ushered in and His will be obeyed.

Then the other three petitions have to do with our needs and necessities. After giving God His supreme place, we turn to our needs. This is the right way to pray. When God is given His proper place, all other things fall into the right place. When our will is rightly aligned with God's glory, His rule and His kingdom, then we are in a position to pray for our needs. True prayer is not trying to persuade an unwilling God but to bring our wills in alignment with His will so that He can work on our behalf.

The three essential needs of man are mentioned. Bread is necessary for the maintenance of life in the present. This represents our needs of **the present**. Forgiveness is for what has already taken place. This represents the need to bring **the past** to God. Help in temptation refers to **the future**. The future must be also brought to God. The whole of human life brought to God. It is to be considered in the light of His glory, His rule and His will.

I. God-exalting: When we present our needs, we express our trust and confidence in His nature. We affirm His character.

The prayer for bread magnifies His goodness. The prayer for forgiveness magnifies His mercy. The prayer for help in temptation and deliverance from evil magnified His power and strength.

1. God-ward petitions: Thy Name Who art in heaven – God who is there, not a psychological exercise. Hallowed – Make holy, sanctify. Name – His nature and character.

Enable us to give to Thee the unique place which Thy nature and character deserve and demand. A constant awareness of God is necessary. In His Catechism, Martin Luther asks, “How is God's nature hallowed among us?” His answer is “When both our life and doctrine are truly Christian.” When our intellectual convictions and beliefs about God and our practical actions are in full submission to the will of God.

2. Thy Kingdom: Thy sovereign rule. The kingdom is the realm where God's rule is accepted, it includes those who have accepted His rule. It is a prayer of submission to God's rule.

3. Thy will: It is not fate. (III.) The child killed in an accident. It is not the whim and fancy of a capricious deity living in isolated bliss away from human experience. It is the benevolent and good purpose of our heavenly Father.

This is not to be prayed in a tone of defeated resignation or in a tone of bitter resentment. (III.) Thomas Hardy is a writer of fiction which portrays his pessimistic philosophy of life. In *Tess of the Durbervilles*, Tess is a young rustic girl whose life is full of sorrow and suffering. When he finished the story, Hardy says, “The President of the Immortals had finished his sport with Tess.” Robert Browning triumphantly declares, “God, Thou art love! I build my faith on that... Light for me in the darkness, tempering sorrow so that it reached me like a solemn joy. It were too strange that I should doubt Thy love.”

All this means making God the centre of our life.

You cannot pray these three petitions without becoming aware of God's mission. His name is to be hallowed in all places. His kingdom

must come in all lives and His purpose of salvation must be realized among all men. (III.)

II. Self-ward petitions: Two realms are presented – the realm of material needs, the realm of spiritual needs. Two petitions relating to the spiritual and one relating to the material. The world of material needs, the world of grace (and people), the world of evil. All these three are real. 1. The world of material needs is accepted. It is real. But don't let it dominate you. Accept this world as God's gift and accept His lordship over it. If you grasp it, it will lead to disillusionment – job or money or family. Everything will take its place when you relate it to God.

2. The world of grace: Sin-Debt – A failure to pay that which is due, a failure in duty. There are many meanings to the word sin. As one forgiven, look at other people. There are duties to each other as human beings. When people don't give us our due, even when we are in the right, we must forgive.

III. The world of evil: There is a power of evil in the world. This is not an abstract principle of evil or force of evil but an active, personal power in opposition to God. The evil one is in the world. Standards, values and perspectives of the world are perverted. Evil has invaded every realm. Recognize this and seek God's leading and delivering power.

Thine: The prayer ends on this note.

Not my house, my pleasure, my money, my opinion, my life. Thine is the Kingdom. But because they are His gifts to us, they are ours.

One day they shall be actually His though now they are His potentially. Rev. 11:15 The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ and he shall reign forever and ever. To this end, we labour.

28. Prayer – Power Source for Missions

I tremble whenever I am called to preach on the topic of prayer. The reason is this; I feel I still have not measured up. I do not know that any time I'm doing enough prayer. I do not know whether anyone has ever come to the place where they have done enough prayer. That is one area where we all feel that we can do better. So, to teach on prayer or to preach on prayer is not easy. It is not easy for you I am sure, as it's not easy for me. So what I am sharing with you I am sharing with a sense of inadequacy. I trust that it will be useful for us.

Now if we look at the Scriptures there are many prayers in the Bible. We're not going to look at all of them. We're going to concentrate on some truths which we can glean from the life of our Lord and from the experience and writings of Paul, as to what place prayer has in missions. Then I'll give you a few examples from history.

Why did Jesus, the incarnate Son of God have to pray? He had to pray because when He became incarnate he subjected Himself to the Father. He did not give up being God but came functionally as the Son to reveal God and to offer Himself a sacrifice for human sin. When He became man he submitted Himself and became subject to the Father. He became dependent on the Father's will. That is why you find in the Gospel of John, it is expressed many times how He came to do the will of the Father. John 4:34 says, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me." You find it in John 5, 6 and 8. In all these passages you find it says, "I came to do the will of him who sent me." I should not please myself but him who sent me

I. Dependence on God: It shows His dependence. In that dependence He had to lift up His eyes to pray to His Father in heaven.

If Jesus, in his humanity and in fulfilling the will of God, had to depend so much upon the Father, and pray so much, how much more should we. In fact, prayer is an expression of our dependence on God. Let's remember that because there are the other aspects of prayer also which the Scriptures talk about. For example, in prayer there is authority exercised and authority comes through faith, and there are

many wonderful promises in the Bible to claim through prayer. When you believe these promises you can claim, appropriate and possess. All these are wonderful words.

We can claim, we can appropriate, we can possess and that gives us a sense of authority. But remember that it never makes us limit God. Sometimes in the name of faith we almost become mini gods, commanding God, trying to manipulate God. There is a balance in this. He says there is authority given to us. That is one side. On the other side, never get away from the sovereignty of God when you think of prayer. He is King. He has not abdicated His throne and has not given you or me that place.

We can exercise faith, we can claim, appropriate, possess, command and exercise authority but under His sovereign authority. So there must be the element of dependence on God. Just because I exercise authority I don't become a mini god trying to manipulate God. Prayer should never generate to manipulating God, asking Him to do what I want Him to do for me. The expression of dependence is basic to prayer. It acknowledges His sovereignty, His authority. It also acknowledges my place. Let's not forget that because sometimes there is a tendency to forget that.

II. Need of the Holy Spirit: In the life of our Lord Jesus you find that there is a specific occasion when he prayed, a specific need for which he prayed. He prayed when He was conscious of His need of anointing, when He was conscious of His need of the power of the Holy Spirit. There is a mystery in that. Does He not have power in Himself? Then why did he need the power of the Holy Spirit? Why did He need the anointing of the Holy Spirit?

Let's turn to the Gospel of Luke and see there in 3:21, "But all the people were being baptized. Jesus was baptized too and as He was praying heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on Him in bodily form like a dove and a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son whom I love, with you I am well pleased.'" Isn't that a wonderful Trinitarian passage? The voice of the Father in heaven, the Holy Spirit descending on Him and He the incarnate Son standing there in the river Jordan being baptized and praying. If you don't believe in the Trinity

you will have a hard time juggling with these verses. But we believe in the Trinity, don't we?

I wonder what His prayer was, we are not told. But I want you to see the significance of this occasion. Here he was standing in that long line of men who came to be baptized because they recognized that they were sinners. John the Baptist was preaching redemption, baptism and forgiveness of sins. That was the baptism of John which was not Christian baptism. John was speaking of a washing, a purification of sins. So here were these men, recognizing their sin, repenting and wanting to go through that baptism which John had talked about and described.

What place did the Son of God have there? He was identifying Himself with sinners. Why? Because He was to be the sin offering. That is why in that baptism context, John the Baptist said, "Behold the Lamb of God." You see the connection-the Lamb of God as a sin offering. He was identifying Himself with sinners. So He must have been praying as He was beginning His ministry, as He was offering Himself as a sin offering, setting Himself apart, praying that His Father would enable Him for this. In answer to that prayer, the Spirit descended on Him. Why did the Spirit descend on Him? That was an anointing of an offering.

Look at Hebrews 9:14, "How much more then will the blood of Christ who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death so that we may serve the living God?" Did you notice there-through the eternal Spirit he offered Himself as a sin offering? That is its implication. So it was the Holy Spirit who helped Him to do that. He in His incarnate state needed the enabling, the empowering and the anointing of the Spirit of God.

The Spirit descended like a dove. Why like a dove- Because the dove is a sacrificial bird. In Lev. 12 we read, "If a woman wants to purify herself ceremonially, if she could not afford an animal she could offer a dove." A dove was a bird that could be offered as a sacrifice for anyone rich or poor. This was everyone's sin offering. Jesus was going to be a

sin offering for everyone. So the Spirit descended on Him like a dove to enable Him to be that offering.

So prayer for enabling, for anointing, for power was needed. Are we right in asking God's Spirit to help us, to anoint us and to enable us for His work? Yes we can and we are entitled to ask. In fact in Scripture we are told to ask that we may receive the Spirit's enabling, his power, his anointing. We need that before we launch out on any service for God.

III. Vision & Direction through early Morning Prayer: He prayed to keep His vision clear and straight. Look at Mark 1:35, "Very early in the morning when it was still dark Jesus got up." Now is there any special significance in that? Yes, you know there are special times of prayer that we see in the Bible. Jesus our Lord sometimes prayed all night and there were times when he rose up early in the morning before dawn. There are some people who have never seen the sunrise because they always rise up later than the sun. If you are in Christian service please practice getting up before the sun gets up. There is value in praying early in the morning. That is a fresh time. It is good at such a time to give ourselves to prayer. Let us make that a habit and a practice.

Very early in the morning while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place where he prayed. Then Simon and his companions went to look for him and when they found Him they claimed everyone was looking for Him. Look at the previous verse, verse 34. Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also cast out many demons but He would not let the demons speak because they knew who He was. So He was completely occupied bringing deliverance, healing and hope to people. What was the time? Verse 32 says that evening had come and it was after sunset. If he started after sunset he might have gone late into the night and yet early morning he did not say, 'Well I worked late, so let me sleep late.'

He worked late but He got up early and went there. He must have been pressed with these needs and the burden of humanity on Him. Then as He was praying, Simon found Him out and along with his companions he came and said, "Lord, everyone is looking for you. What are you doing here in this lonely place all by yourself? You must be out there teaching, healing and doing all of this. You must be active and not be withdrawing into a solitary place.' That was implied in Simon's words.

Jesus replied in verse 38. "Let us go somewhere else to the nearby villages so that I can preach there also. That is why I have come."

Out of this we get a clear sense of direction, a clear vision of the purpose why He had come. I believe early Morning Prayer time had something to do with it. There are far too many Christian people in full time Christian service today with cluttered up minds and consciences, without any sense of direction and that is why we have all our problems, powerlessness and ineffectiveness. If we would do what God wants us to be doing, we need to pray much.

Why do we have cluttered up minds that have no clear sense of direction? It is because we have not given ourselves to find out what God wants us to do and given ourselves to prayer. If you do not have that early morning time set apart to wait in His presence to have your vision cleared up and to have a sense of direction you will not be able to fulfill His mission during the day. He gives us a sense of direction. Crowds, external circumstances, not even available opportunities, and available resources determine my agenda. I will not be pushed by available resources. I will do what my Father wants me to do. That was our Lord, and that comes from prayer, a clear sense of direction.

In Luke 5:16, Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed. Why does Luke put that text in the context of what follows? Look at what follows. One day as He was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law who had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem, were sitting there and the power of the Lord was present for Him to heal the sick and there was a paralytic man whom our Lord healed. Look in verse 21 at the reactions of the Pharisees and the Scribes. They began thinking to themselves, 'Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?' Why were these religious leaders there? Was it accidental? No it was deliberate. It was almost a delegation. They had come representing Judea, Jerusalem and every village in Galilee. They had come to observe, scrutinize and to find fault with him.

IV. Poise through Prayer: When people come to oppose, find fault with you in the audience, how does it affect you? Or when you find

them present in the neighbourhood or very close at hand, how does it affect our sense of mission and purpose? We'll all get upset, all confused and fuming, not knowing what to do. Doesn't that happen to us and yet we see here, how much he retained His poise in the midst of such a situation. He knew that this paralytic was there and if He forgave his sins and healed him, immediately they would question His authority to forgive sins. Sometimes we do not do things, just to avoid being humiliated, despised and opposed or slandered.

I want to ask you this question. Which is more important in your thinking, in your consideration, that you should not be humiliated, you should not be slandered, you should not be opposed, and you should be given a clean sheet? Is that the most important consideration or is it more important that you do what God wants you to do? Most of us would like the line of least resistance. We don't want to be resisted. You can never fulfill His mission if you choose that line, because when we serve Him we may be slandered, humiliated, despised and opposed. Yet how do we retain poise and what is the poise? We may do the wrong thing-that is our problem isn't it? That I write the wrong letter, say the wrong thing, do the wrong thing and be upset with the opposition. People who should be on the fringe of my life, I put them on the central page of my life thinking all the time about what they are saying about us, what they are doing to us and that may affect our ministry and our mission.

However on the other hand if I know how to spend time in prayer, then the poise that comes through prayer that's what you find. Luke put verse 5:16 for a purpose. He wasn't referring to a single season of prayer there; he was referring to a habit, a lifetime. He said, 'Jesus often withdrew to a lonely place and prayed.' He often did that. Therefore in the midst of opposition, which was deliberate and willful, he could retain his poise. You may have come from institutions where it is difficult to serve. You do not know on whose foot you will tread. If that is the kind of situation from which you have come, poise comes through prayer. It comes through dependence on God in prayer.

V. Delegation through Prayer: Then we find in Luke 6:12, "one of those days Jesus went out into the hills to pray and spent the night praying to

God. The morning came and He called his disciples to him and chose 12 of them whom he also designated apostles." He was going to choose 12 and entrust his ministry to them and that is important in missionary work, isn't it? We don't do it all by ourselves. We are all the time developing and training others.

Billy Graham was asked that if he would become the pastor of a large city church what would be his utmost priority. He said he would choose 12 men in that church and invest his time, his effort, his life in them so even if he moved from that church they would carry on the work. That's what Jesus did-the training of the twelve. He invested himself in them. So before he could choose the 12 he prayed and it was a deliberate time of prayer that he set apart. You may ask, after all that prayer why did he go and choose Judas? That can happen to you and to me also. Don't say, 'Just because I prayed all night, I shouldn't have made that mistake.'

You have prayed so much and you thought it was the will of God and yet your marriage arrangement is broken. Don't blame your time of prayer and say, 'I prayed so much and yet it is broken, this affair didn't go through.' No, that is where you find the divine and human combination and we live in such a paradoxical situation, in such a tension. It doesn't mean even if we pray all night there will be no errors. I don't think Jesus made a mistake. This is altogether another subject. Why did he choose Judas? Whether he knew that Judas would betray him or not? We notice that he prayed and chose the 12 and one did turn out to be a traitor. So it is important that we pray before we make any important decision.

In Luke 9:18 once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, 'Who do the crowd say I am?' This was an important transition, an important event in his ministry. He was going to reveal Himself, his true mission to these 12. So far he had never spoken about his sufferings, his death and resurrection. You find that all this comes in the middle of the Gospel. In Mark it comes in the 8th chapter. In Matthew it comes in the 16th chapter. In Luke it doesn't come in the middle but it comes in the middle of his Jerusalem journey. The second time Jesus revealed who he was and how he was going to suffer, die and rise again. So it was done deliberately. He chose the 12,

waited for an opportunity and then revealed this truth. But before he would reveal that truth he spent time in prayer. You see how important occasions in his ministry were preceded by times of prayer. I don't have to emphasize this because we know the value of it. We are so helpless, so dependent.

One of the prayers that we often pray in the IEM is 'Lord we don't want to make mistakes in choosing our missionaries, keep away those who should not be here and bring in those that only should be here.' Very often it is a great travail of soul and spirit and it is not done easily. With all that we have made mistakes. We are not perfect. Yet that travail of soul, 'Lord we just cannot do this by ourselves, we are prone to make mistakes and become subjective. We can be influenced by our emotions. You guide me; we are cast on you for every important phase of our ministry.' I tell you if we would do more of that we would see more of God's blessing. If you ask me what the more important need in Indian missions is, I would say it is a need for this kind of prayer.

I'm not saying there isn't prayer in India, there may be prayer. But this kind of prayer, a prayer that throws us completely on him is missing. An absolute helplessness, dependence, renouncing our dependence on all other things, the things that cater to our pride of life, our dependence on money, our dependence on other things, and to say it is You whom we need, you should guide us, direct us, protect us, maintain us, rule over us, and overrule us and we are dependent on you. That's what the Master did, that is what He prayed.

VI. Compassion in Prayer : Look again at his teachings on prayer. In Matthew 9:35-38 note the expression in verse 38, 'the Lord of the harvest.' Who is the Lord of the harvest He is referring to here? I believe it is Himself, because you see in John 4 how He is in absolute, sovereign control over the harvest. John 4:35 says, 'Do you not say 4 months more and then the harvest? I tell you "Open your eyes and look at the fields. They are ripe for harvest."' So who is the lord of the harvest-He Himself. Here He is saying, "Pray to the Lord of the harvest." In verse 35 we read, He has gone through all the villages and towns of Galilee and what He has seen has really affected Him.

As a result you note in verse 36, 'When He saw the crowd He had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.' Then He said to the disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.' He had compassion and He wanted to pass on that compassion to his disciples. What is compassion? I know in compassion there is deep feeling because we often read in the Gospels, 'Jesus was moved with compassion.' That expression means He was stirred to His depths, moved within His bowels as it were. Stirred to His depths with compassion. There is a place for compassion, for tears, for feeling, for emotions.

In the Salvation Army one of his officers complained to Gen. William Booth about the hardness of the place where he was stationed and about the difficulties he had with co-workers and Booth replied, 'Try tears, try tears.' So there is a place for tears. We may not shed them in public but we may shed a lot of them in private. And if you are not able to shed them outwardly there are tears in the heart, there is agony and pain in the heart. We are moved and deeply stirred.

VII. Seeing People as Sheep without a Shepherd : But compassion has to do with the perspective, with the mind. We must remember this that it is not all with the emotions. We can do a lot of shouting and crying in prayer and go out and behave as if it's just another show. It has nothing to do with our life and our ministry. Well, that is not what we are talking about. There is a place for emotion, feeling, tears, but compassion had to do with perspective. How did Jesus see the people, that is why this text is important. He saw the people as harassed. Look at what Matt. 9:36 says 'they were harassed.'

That word harassed means tormented or literally translated, 'flayed'. That is you take a sheep and skin it. So he saw people as tormented. And who torments them? Oppressive structures in society, exploiting landlords, money lenders, yes they are all tormenting agents, but the greatest is the devil himself. He torments them with guilt, he torments them with fear. They are as those who are helpless, and have no hope in themselves like sheep without a shepherd. So the condition that is described here is that they are helpless, they are tormented and then they are lost. They need the Saviour.

Do we see people in this way? In the mind are we convinced that people are lost without Christ? I tell you the sharp edge of missions is taken away today from our denominations and churches because we don't believe anymore that people will go to hell if they do not believe in Jesus Christ. We do not believe anymore that people are lost without Jesus Christ. It is the sense that people are lost without Christ that brings to us the burden. May we see people as Christ saw them and see them as tormented, a lost and helpless people and let our minds be convinced and then with that compassion we give ourselves to prayer. And pray for what? Here the prayer has to do with the harvest, pray for more harvesters, that is very basic.

Look at the unreached people and begin praying for them using prayer cards. The word 'send' in Greek means, thrust forth, and shot forth. It's almost like a cannon ball being shot out of the canon. Why, because some people won't move unless you put a bomb under their chair. They literally have to be shot out. So we have to pray them out. So if you believe in your heart that someone should be in missionary service, begin praying for him or her that they may be shot out. That's not wrong. Don't go and pressurize them, don't go and take God's place. But pray for them. God can shoot them out and thrust them forth. But then as you pray to God to shoot forth workers he may shoot you out. That happens often. You may answer your own prayer.

VIII. Prayer an encounter : Then you notice that our Lord speaks on prayer in another context, Matt. 12:29. How can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man then he can rob his house. Now he is mentioning this in the context of casting out demons. Missions is an encounter, it is a conflict, and it's a confrontation. It is not all successful numerical church growth. If you have that concept of missions you have not tried it. There is numerical church growth, praise God for it. We should go where the harvest is ripe and win the winnable. We should go to the responsive and reap the reaping. All of that is fine and we do not ignore them. We don't let the harvest go waste. But having said that, there is a place for plodding, for sowing, for continuous, persistent labour. The Bible talks about it.

Then there is the time when we enter into conflict, a combat, a

confrontation, an encounter. Here Jesus is not talking about the harvest. He is talking about goods which a strong man is holding in his possession. They don't belong to him. He is a thief, the robber. He has come by the side way and he has taken all these goods, plundered all these goods. But don't go and fight with him directly. First he must be bound. Who can bind him? The Lord can bind him.

And we, by prayer, using the authority which he has given using his name, we can bind him. But that doesn't mean you become sovereign. With a sense of dependence which also gives us authority, we bind the strong man. We need that kind of praying, binding the strong man in prayer. And you know we will see more victories if we do that.

Think of the stronghold of the Hindi belt, the fortress of Hinduism which still has not yielded in spite of all that we are doing. And if we would take hold of the Lord and bind the strong man. Think of the tribal areas like Bastar district which still has not had a breakthrough. And some other areas where we can bind the strong man in the name of Jesus. So he is asking us to deliver the people who he is holding in bondage, through prayer.

IX. Paul's prayers : Now we come to Paul. And look at what the apostle said about prayer. Eph. 6:19, 'Pray also for me.' So now there is not only prayer for labourers to be sent into the harvest, and prayer that binds the strong man and delivers the goods, but there is prayer for the missionary, 'pray for me.' Does the missionary also need prayer, those who are serving the Lord? Yes, they need intelligent prayer. Very specific prayer.

1. Specific: And you know **Paul's** prayers were specific. I want you to study his prayers in Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians and we learn a lot from these prayers. Each church had a specific need. When he prayed for the Philippians he prayed for love. He prayed for discerning love, not sentimental, fleshy love, but discerning love. And then when he prayed for the Colossians he prayed that their minds would be filled with the knowledge of the will of God and they would have power to endure. When he prayed for the Thessalonians it was a prayer that they may be established in holiness. So you see his prayer varied according to the needs. So when we pray for missionaries it should be an intelligent prayer.

What will they need? They will need to know the will of God. You know that this kind of prayer we can pray for the new converts as well as for missionaries. 'Lord I pray that this missionary will know what he should do. He is on the field, he can be doing so many things which are not necessary, dissipating his energy, but help him to know what is needed. Help him to know your will and do it. And I pray that you will give him that power, that inner power to understand all circumstances. And I pray that you will give him love for those among whom he works and for his co-workers.'

2. **A Pattern:** So Paul gives us a pattern here. His prayers were for power, for love, for knowing God's will. And then not only for the missionaries but also that the missionary may know what to speak. Whenever I open my mouth words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the Gospel. Note there are 2 things he says: One, 'I will speak the Word boldly and I will also know what to speak.' So pray that the missionary will have the words, the message and will have the boldness to speak those words.

Then turn to Col.4:3, 4, "Pray for me too that God may open a door for our message." So pray that doors will be opened. You know there are open doors and closed doors. We admit it and the Bible speaks about it. But closed doors should not become an obsession with us. We should not develop a closed door, open door syndrome as it were. That is, the door is closed; nothing can be done, so we will just write it off. There are some churches in the west that have a tendency to write off India that way, just because western missionaries cannot come to India. They are very wrong and I tell them that. We need to tell them that.

Because missionaries may not be able to go in one particular way but there are other ways in which others can come in that country and carry on the work and they need prayer support. So we don't go into that kind of closed door mentality. But at the same time we must recognize that our adversary Satan uses human instruments, governments and other agents to hinder, to block and to create obstacles. So we need to pray that God will break this power and this authority and will open doors and will keep doors open and give us opportunities that we may serve him. So let's not give up or give in, but

pray that there will be opportunities even to us.

Will you pray that in India, in many of our states, the doors of opportunities will be kept open? God is answering prayers for Andhra Pradesh. Do you know that Andhra Pradesh is opening though not widely but little by little? They are asking Christians teachers to come there. The church is growing. The percentage of Christians is increasing. It's 2% now. Whoever thought that there would at least be 2% Christians there? It is more than some of the north Indian states.

I heard recently that the Tamil Nadu government will be under pressure from some groups to bring in a law forbidding conversion. Just think, a law like that coming in Tamil Nadu of all places. We can't take things for granted and go sailing along merrily. We need to keep praying that the doors of opportunity will be kept open and that again is a prayer for missions.

3. Clarity: Then he says in verse 4 "Pray that I will proclaim the message clearly." That's interesting isn't it? Not only boldly, and correctly, but also clearly. You may have the boldness and the correctness but you may be all messed up in your presentation. So we need to pray that the missionary will present this clearly, correctly and courageously and we must pray for that. Now prayer has opened the doors and has done things in missions- The first missionary movement in the church in Antioch. That is not the first missionary movement, but the first missionary movement in the church in Antioch was born in prayer. When they were fasting and praying the Spirit said, 'separate Barnabas and Paul.' So you see missions are born in prayer.

X. The Mission History

1. Bishop V.S. Azariah

Before 1903 there was a young, energetic Tamil Christian in Tirunelveli. God burdened him, and that was a time when there were very few Indian Christians who ever thought of reaching the rest of India. The Marthoma Evangelistic Association was formed in 1888 but this is the early nineteen hundreds. This young man was working in the YMCA and he gathered a few people with him and started praying regularly. And do you know who opposed him-the pastors. I am a pastor and I am not saying this critically by no means- my fellow

ministers, I know what they go through. But in the history of the church, missions that are born outside the regular structure have always been opposed. And that should not make us bitter. It should not make us separatists. And you find this throughout our denominational missionary societies. The Baptist missionary society was not launched by the Baptist official. It was launched by laymen and then the Baptist church began to own it.

And this is true of all the denominational missionary societies like the London Missionary Society and others with this mission. He was opposed, and was not understood. But he and his friends held on in prayer and that was how the Indian Missionary Society was born in 1903. The young man I referred to later became Bishop V.S. Azariah-respected, loved and honoured by the Church. Not only in India but this happened around the world. But it began that way in prayer.

Then the same Bishop Azariah, along with 2 Burmese Christians, one American missionary and a few national Christian leaders were burdened to begin a national mission and again they were praying as a group and on Christmas day 1905 in Serampur College they launched the National Missionary Movement. In 1954/55 God began to use the Vacation Bible School in South India, particularly in Tamil Nadu to bring revival and new life into the churches. So many students, teenagers and teachers became believers. And those who were involved in this work, (I was one of them), formed them into small prayer groups, we called these prayer groups VBS Friends' Fellowship.

This went on from 1966 onwards. We used to meet for retreats and spend times in prayer, study of God's Word and fellowship. At other times these groups would meet in prayer on their own once a week or once a month or when they had the opportunity. Then in 1959 in one of those retreats God laid the burden on Mr. P. Samuel and me, that we should introduce missionary concern and missionary vision to this group. So at the end of that retreat after a day of fasting and prayer towards the evening in 1959 in December the Friends Missionary Prayer Band was launched. And today that work is supported by prayer bands- many, many praying people supporting missionaries and the mission.

2. Birth of a mission

Then in 1954 came the Evangelical Fellowship of India which has emphasized prayer for revival in the church and which was born in a revival which took place in Union Biblical Seminary in 1951. EFI shares the burden for reaching those who have not heard the Gospel. So the leaders of the EFI were praying and as a result of their prayer the Indian Evangelical Overseas Mission was born in 1954. They supported a couple who went to Kenya. But then because there was no one to give fulltime to that mission the whole thing came to a standstill. But the burden was there.

And then in 1964 and 65 God began to speak to us in EFI again. By this time I was a part of EFI executive committee. And I remember in 1965 at that annual conference the Spirit of God came upon us with a real concern that we should do something. 'The number of foreign missionaries is coming down. There are still many people who have not heard the Gospel. There are young people who want to go as missionaries, what can we do?' The executive committee consisted of expatriate missionaries, foreign missionaries as well as Indian nationals. So the expatriates said let the Indian brethren go and seek the Lord's face and do what He is asking them to do. So we got together, prayed and launched on Jan.15, 1965 the Indian Evangelical Mission.

3. Feats through prayer

A lady in the USA in the state of New Jersey was very much burdened for a particular high school that some of those students should become missionaries and Christian workers. She prayed for 14 years and her son was bashed up by another boy in the school. And she had a burden for this boy and started sending literature, John's Gospel to him, and began praying for him. And that boy was converted. That boy was George Verwer. As a result of her prayer George Verwer and his companions began to pray with a burden to reach the world and Operation Mobilization India was born in the early 60's. So I can go on talking about this.

There was one woman whose son had gone as a missionary to Colombia and this was the time when in Columbia protestant missionaries were beaten and almost killed. Churches were burned;

there was persecution by the Roman Catholic Church. She prayed, 'Lord my son has gone there, I'm asking you to give one person'. Then her son who had gone there as a missionary, died. There was no one there for her to pray for, so instead of praying for another missionary to be sent she prayed a very strange prayer. She said, 'Lord to replace my son in that land I want you to convert one of those priests.'

Here was a monk locked up in one of those monasteries and he became increasingly restless and as he began to look at the life around him he found a lot of deception, a lot of unreality and his heart was reaching out for Jesus Christ. He refused to worship Mary and yet in the monastery with all of those rules and regulations how could he ever hear the Gospel? But one day he just could not contain himself. He was seeking and he was led to knock at the door of a protestant missionary who then led him to Christ. His story is written in a book, 'The monk who lived again.' All because one woman took hold of God in prayer and asked God for one monk. He became the leader of an evangelical church, a Protestant church in Colombia.

A Ministry of Prayer:

Friends, is God calling you to a ministry of prayer. To pay the price and to be involved in it? Don't say, 'I will be a missionary I won't pray.' No, first you begin with prayer, only then God will make sure whether you will be a missionary or not. If you are not faithful there how can we trust you as a missionary? So begin there, that's where all of us can begin, without any difference. All of us should pray for labourers, to pray for missionaries that they will speak clearly, correctly, courageously. That doors of opportunity would be kept open. Pray that the strong man would be bound and people would be delivered. Pray specifically for things, that God would lead you to pray in groups to attempt great things for Him and expect great things from Him. I don't believe that we have all the missions that we should have in India. May many more missions be born. But make sure they are born on the basis of prayer and not on the basis of dollars, pounds and German marks.

VIII. Missions and the Missionary Calling

29. Why Missions?

A missionary was talking to a group of young people. One of them asked him, 'Isn't it exciting to be a missionary to go to new places and to meet strange people?' Adventure and heroism have always been associated with the work of a pioneer missionary. It is the ambition of some people to do what no one else ordinarily does. This can come into our missionary motive also. So we may want to go where no one else has gone and no one else has preached. Others may be stirred up when they see missionary slides and hear missionary statistics and stories.

Missionary information is important. It does have a vital part in imparting missionary concern. But our missionary involvement should not be based on missionary slides, statistics and stories alone. The fact that more than two billion people have not heard the Gospel and there are thousands of people groups without a church among them cannot be ignored. But that alone is not sufficient reason for us to be involved in missions.

What then is the basis of missions? Why missions? Missions is in God's purpose. It is rooted in God's purpose revealed in Scripture. Our missionary concern is not a sentimental experience. It must be a deep conviction born out of an understanding of God's purpose taught in the Bible leading us to a total commitment to that purpose.

God's redemptive purpose is revealed in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. We should not think that there are only a few texts in the New Testament such as the Great Commission passages in the Gospels which talk about missions. God's missionary purpose can be traced throughout the Bible. Every important phase of the history of God's people in the Old Testament reveals it.

I. The Old Testament

1. The Call of Abraham

God's call came to Abraham at Ur in the land of Mesopotamia. God said, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.... I will bless those who bless

you, and him who curses you I will curse: and by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves" (Genesis 22:1, 3). The same promise is repeated in Genesis 22:15-18 with an oath. Note the words "families of the earth" in Genesis 12:3 and "nations of the earth" in Genesis 22:18. The word "families" is translated as "clans" in some of our Indian languages. This is correct. In the Bible we read the classification of the human race as "families," "nations," "peoples," "languages," and "tribes." God views the entire human race as a beautiful mosaic of linguistic, tribal, cultural and ethnic groupings. There is beauty in this variety. But sinful man has erected barriers out of this beautiful variety. It is God's purpose that each of these groups of people should be blessed through Abraham.

The word "blessing" implies wholeness. It is salvation blessing. This two-tier promise which God gave to Abraham is the most significant feature of the covenant He made with Abraham and can be traced throughout the Scriptures in God's promises and dealings. This God revealed in Genesis is no narrow tribal deity handing out His blessings only to a group of people. He is the God of all nations who has purposed to bless all groups of people through His chosen ones, Abraham and his descendants. We are told that there are more than 1000 dialects and about 427 tribal groups in India. It is God's purpose that each of these groups must hear the good news of salvation and the Church must be planted among them. This is what He meant when He called Abraham.

3 The Call of Israel

Three months after they left Egypt the people of Israel arrived in the wilderness of Sinai. There at Mount Sinai God established His covenant with them. They were constituted to be the "congregation of the people of God." In His call to them He said, "If you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine, and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exodus 19:5, 6). Note the words "all peoples" and "all the earth." God's concern for the whole world and all peoples is reflected here. Also, note the two tier nature of the blessing that was promised. They would be His people and they had the responsibility to be His priests to all the peoples of the earth and to be a consecrated (holy) nation set apart for His purposes on the

earth. The people of God were to be a missionary people. "You are my witness", says the Lord, "and my servant whom I have chosen" (Isaiah 43:10).

3. The Construction of the Temple

Throughout their wilderness wanderings, the Israelites worshipped at the tabernacle which they carried with them as they moved about. Then God wanted Solomon to build the temple. It was the symbol of God's dwelling in the midst of His people. Very soon it became an object of pride for the Israelites and they presumed wrongly that as long as the temple was in their midst, they were secure. Not realizing their missionary responsibility, they mistakenly presumed that they were objects of God's special love and God's salvation was only for them. But at the time of the dedication of the temple, Solomon revealed clearly God's missionary purpose in his prayer.

He prayed, "When a foreigner, who is not of thy people Israel, comes from a far country for thy name's sake... and prays towards this house, hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to thee; in order that all the peoples of the earth may know thy name and fear thee, as do thy people Israel, and that they may know that this house which I have built is called by thy name" (1 Kings 8:41-43).

There was no structure or institution given to God's people which did not have some link or other with God's missionary purpose. How important it is for the Church, the people of God to realize this today! Often we spend much money and effort in constructing beautiful church buildings. This is not wrong. But are we concerned that that church building should serve God's missionary purpose? How many structures and institutions we have today without any relevance to God's missionary purpose? When this happens, they become breeding grounds for strife and selfishness.

4. The Community worship

The book of Psalms was the hymn book of the people of Israel. Many of the psalms were sung in their community worship in the temple. The title of Psalm 67 says, "To the choirmaster with stringed instruments." This psalm must have been sung often in their

worship. We can discern the two tier nature of the Abrahamic promise in the first two verses of this psalm. "May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, that thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving power among all nations." In the first part of their prayer in song they sought God's blessing on themselves and in the second part they reminded themselves that God's salvation blessing must reach all groups of people on the earth. How often our prayers and our religious life are self-centred! We are concerned only about our health, security and prosperity. Unconsciously we slip into pernicious half truth, the Prosperity doctrine which teaches that if you trust Christ you will have health and prosperity and live a long life. We presume that God exists only for our benefit and have no concern for His missionary purpose. From psalm 67 we learn that God's missionary purpose must be expressed and taught in every worship service in our churches. It must be woven into our prayer, praise and worship. How much of our singing reflects God's true nature and His missionary purpose?

I. The Common hope of Israel

The hope of Israel was centered on the Messiah. There were two strains in the messianic prophecies. One was that he would be the suffering Servant and the other he would be the glorious King. In both these groups of prophecies God reveals His missionary concern. Speaking of the suffering Servant, Isaiah 49:6 says, "I will give you as light to the nations that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth." In Isaiah 52:15 we read of His atoning work for the sins of all the peoples of the earth, "...so shall he sprinkle many nations". Speaking of the coming King, Isaiah 66:18 says, "I am coming to gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and shall see my glory."

II. The New Testament

1. The Central acts of God

Coming to the New Testament we read here of two central acts of God in human history, Calvary and Pentecost. Why did Jesus die on the cross of Calvary? In the new song sung by the four living creatures (as representatives of all creatures) and the twenty-four elders (as

representatives of all the redeemed) they said, "... Thou wast slain and by the blood didst ransom men for God from every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and hast made them a kingdom and priests to our God" (Revelation 5:9, 10). If Christ shed His blood and gave His life to redeem men and women and to build His Church among every group of people, how can we be unconcerned about this?

In Acts 1:8, our Lord promised His disciples, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth." Here we see that the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was to fulfill God's missionary purpose. The Holy Spirit was not given for our enjoyment or ecstasy or for spiritual exhibitionism. If a person says that he is Spirit-filled and does not have any missionary concern, his experience is questionable.

2. The Commission of Christ

In all the four Gospels we read the last words of our Lord spoken to the disciples. The last words of a person spoken to those whom He loves certainly reveal his most important concern. Here our Lord revealed His missionary concern. "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19).

3. The Consummation of all things

Speaking of the consummation of all things, Jesus said, "This gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come" (Matthew 24:14). Most of us are interested in studying prophecy and knowing about end times. But if our interest in the future is not coupled with a vital missionary concern, it will be an unhealthy curiosity about the future.

When I was visiting an unevangelized area in North Andamans, early one morning I looked out of the small hut in which I was staying and saw a range of hills in front of me. I knew that there were many villages on those hills. Suddenly Revelation 7:9 flashed before me. I wondered if there would be some representatives from that people group around the throne on that day. "Behold, a great multitude which no man could number, from every nation, from all tribes and

peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands" (Revelation 7:9). In that glorious climactic scene, God's great missionary purpose was fulfilled.

30. Am I Called ?

God has not stopped calling his people to work in His Vineyard. God's call is for two things.

a. **Call For Salvation** : He calls everyone to be saved. Acts 17:30.

"He commands all people everywhere to repent."

b. **Call for Missions** : He calls all those who are saved to be a blessing for others and to win souls for Him. When people hear about missions, unreached areas of our land and winning souls they are inspired to make a commitment to God. But those who are willing to make a full time commitment are finding it difficult to find God's will for their lives. Is it God's will for me to serve full time?

How do I know where God wants me to go? How does He reveal His will and purpose for me? These questions often haunt us and are indeed genuine and need to be clarified for sure. First of all let us see the wrong views about our calling. Some think that they should seek God's will only if they are interested in Missionary work (need to know God's will for the entire life) some think there is a special merit in serving in an unreached area.

Some think the Missionary call comes in an extraordinary way. We all need to know God's will for our entire life.

How to find God's will?

1. **Inner Voice** : Look for the deepest desire for a particular ministry in your heart. A longing to serve God full time. This would be only a first step. A still small voice from within calling you to serve Him.
2. **Confirm through God's Word** : As you systematically meditate on God's word daily, He will speak to you through His word regarding your calling. It may be a promise or a command, study and apply God's Word carefully. God may speak through a Radio / TV / Speaker / Pastor or in a convention. Let your ears be open.
3. **Look for favourable circumstances** : As you pray and wait upon God's will, He will slowly make your circumstances favourable to you. Here ask God to close all the doors and open one door

that is according to His will. When God has closed a door purposefully, don't try to push it open. When a door is widely opened by God for you don't try to ignore it. Trust God. Pray that God will reveal His will through every circumstance in your life. Sometimes, this could be a waiting period too. Don't be in haste. No one will become a missionary overnight. This waiting could be waiting for parents' approval in some cases too. Remember, God will never open two doors at the same time. Ask God to close all the doors that are not according to His will and open that one door which is in His will.

4. **Experience Peace of heart :** As you think of God's call and wait for His will, you will experience great peace of mind regarding this. This is the right sign of God's will. (Phil. 4:7) If there is still some fear or anxiety dwelling within you, it is good to wait in prayer. God is not a God of confusion but peace and clarity. Don't be hasty.
5. **Step of Faith :** When all is said and done there is always a place for a step of faith. When you have experienced all the above steps, now take a step of faith, trusting God fully. God will never give you a blue print of your life. He will only lead you one step at a time. Until your call is confirmed don't waste your time sitting idly at home. Be involved in the ministry; be sensitive to the Lord's voice. The Call may come in an unexpected way. The heart that is prepared and alert will surely recognize it. John 10:27. "My sheep will hear my voice."

31. The Mission and the Missionary

I. Mission

1. The content of Mission

The content of 'Mission' is often a much misunderstood word. There are those who would define it purely in terms of social and economic needs. The emphasis has been shifted from conversion to social concern and then to social action. We are told that humanization should be the goal of mission. Individual regeneration has been replaced by social revolution. Conversion has given way to concern and action. Proclamation has been substituted by dialogue. The New humanity has replaced the Kingdom of God.

We do not deny the social implications of the Gospel. Coming as we do from countries in Asia that are often referred to as the developing countries, we cannot shut our eyes to the tremendous challenge of the need for development, the need for economic and social justice and the need to reaffirm human dignity and freedom. In fact, any biblical definition of Mission must consider witness and service, proclamation and social involvement as two sides of the same coin. It is only in the context of meaningful involvement with the needs of people that effective proclamation can be carried out. The proclaiming church must be the serving church.

In II Corinthians 5:18-19, Paul speaks of both "the ministry of reconciliation" and "the message of reconciliation" as entrusted to us. In Isaiah 61:1-3, the mission of the Messiah is defined as "proclaiming liberty to the captives" and "binding up the broken-hearted and the opening of the prison to those who are bound". We see a wonderful combination and balance of this in the mission of our Lord and in the mission of the early church as described in the New Testament.

There is a great social and economic change taking place all over Asia. It is drastic and obvious in some countries while it is slow and less obvious in others. In spite of this, there is yet a great deal to be

done. There is the challenge of illiteracy. In some countries it is as high a percentage as 70-95. In my own country, evangelicals are yet to utilize the method of literacy evangelism fully. Cassettes or Gospel records cannot be regarded as a substitute for teaching to read and write and then giving them the printed Scriptures.

There is also the great challenge of medical work. Many of our governments are trying to grapple with the problem of rural health. Rural health education is an avenue of service that is open for the church in Asia. There is also the need to provide simple medical facilities when there is none at all. We need small, mobile medical teams more than top-heavy, highly organized medical institutions. The structure should be flexible and mobile.

The majority of the people of Asia still live in villages though industrialization and urbanization are progressing at a rapid pace. My concept of mission has to take into consideration the rural needs and opportunities. Our young people must be challenged to go to the villages with their medical skill and other professional skills to be a witness for Christ. In the early days of the Christian Church, it was allied with the common people, the oppressed and the despised, the slaves and the working classes. But now, unfortunately it is the communist movement that is allied with the masses. The Church is aligned in many lands with the respectable middle and upper classes. We should not neglect the common masses in our mission. This does not mean that we bypass the big cities and the "concrete jungles" of Asia. We must keep the balance.

The new-born nationalism in many of our Asian lands is characteristically anti-western. This trend along with the renaissance of the ancient religions has branded mission as "proselytism". Secular ideologies that claim to have the economic and social welfare of the masses as their main concern have ridiculed the Christian mission as being other worldly. All this has led to a swing to the other extreme, forgetting the true goal of mission. To understand our mission we must go to the Bible and not to the sociologist's empirical analysis of human needs or to the changing trends of history. A

seventeenth century Dutch theologian had expressed the task of mission as being three-fold: 1. To convert the heathen. 2. To establish churches. 3. To glorify and proclaim divine grace.

Though we will hesitate to use the word 'heathen,' we cannot but agree with this description of mission. Our mission is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those who have not heard it coupling service with our verbal witness having as our goals the conversion of those to whom we proclaim the Gospel and the planting of churches among them. Church planting was a vital part of New Testament mission. We cannot ignore it in our day!

2. The scope of mission

Mission is no longer limited to any one geographical area in this world. There was a time when in Asia we thought that a missionary was one who came from the west. Even today this misunderstanding persists in the mind of many non-Christians in Asia. We are now in an age when there is a universal church. Bishop Stephen Neil writes, "In the 20th century one phenomenon has come into view which is incontestably new – for the first time there is in the world a universal religion, and that the Christian religion." So missionaries are no longer sent only from one geographical area to another. They are sent "from everywhere to everywhere." We speak now of the mission to the six continents.

The word 'nation' is mentioned in the Bible in Psalm 67:1, 2, Isaiah 66:18, Matthew 24:14, 28:18-20. These are all missionary passages. According to these, the scope of mission includes all nations. Nation does not mean America, India, Korea or China. It means people who can be culturally and linguistically identified as a homogeneous group. In this sense each country in Asia is a land of many nations. Our mission must include in its scope all these pockets of people. All such pockets of people must be reached with the Gospel of Christ. There must be disciples for Jesus Christ from each pocket of people. As long as there are groups of people unreached with the Gospel our task is not complete. Our resources must be pooled, our efforts increased and our goals set so that every tribe and tongue and culture is touched with the mission which our Lord gave to us.

We who have gathered here today in East Asia cannot shut our eyes to the great need of west Asia. There are many Muslim nations there without a church or Christian witness. Our strategy in Asia must be from the east to the west because the churches in East Asia are comparatively stronger while in west Asia the church is small or non-existent.

II. Missionary

Let us now turn to the word "missionary."

The following facts can be noted about the New Testament missionaries in our study of the Scriptures.

1. They were sent.

The word 'missionary' means 'one who is sent.' He is sent by God as well as the church. Peter and John were sent by the Jerusalem church to minister to the spiritual needs of the church in Samaria. Again the Jerusalem church sent Barnabas to minister to the needs of the newborn church in Antioch. Paul and Barnabas were sent out by the church in Antioch. They had worked together in fellowship with that church and then they were sent out by the church. When they returned, they came back and reported to the church.

In the multiplication of inter-denominational missionary agencies in Asia, we should not forget the important place of the local church. As far as possible, the missionary should have his roots down in a local church and should be commended by that church for missionary work. They must also have a share in his support.

Missionary involvement is for all while the missionary call may come to a few. This must be recognized by the entire church. If missionaries are linked to local churches and prayer groups with the missionary society functioning as a mere channel through which the missionary is sent, it leads to a total involvement in

missions on the part of those who are not called to go but called to stay back and send. To send is as much a call as it is to go.

Though Paul and Barnabas were members of the Jerusalem church, the church in Antioch sent them as their missionaries. They went as representatives of the body of Christ. This concept of the universality of the church must be stressed more and it must lead to a concept of real partnership in missions. There are certain churches which abound in gifted and trained personnel while others have the financial resources. There must be a willingness to share these resources. It is not easy to send financial support for missionaries from certain countries but they can easily send personnel. Antioch had the financial resources while Jerusalem supplied the men.

The resources of the universal church in terms of men, money and expertise must be available for the use of the whole church. There is no place for talking about Western money or Eastern money.

2. They were trained.

Paul and Barnabas were both trained in building up the church in Antioch before they went out to plant churches in the distant lands. Besides academic training, training is needed in the actual building up of a church. We emphasize very much the institutional training. We should not ignore the training that can be received in the fellowship and ministry of a local church. Every potential missionary must have such experience in a local church. There is also the training that can be gained in team work, an experienced missionary working with a younger missionary training him up in the work. This personal element in training is very important in the Asian situation.

Paul and Barnabas had the training for their mission to the Gentiles in the church at Antioch. It was a cosmopolitan church. There were Lucius, a Gentile from North Africa, Simeon, a Jew from North Africa (or, he might have been an African) and

Manaen from the aristocratic family. Working with such an international and inter-racial team was certainly a training that Paul and Barnabas benefitted from. In these days when there are Bible colleges and seminaries in most of the sending and receiving countries, will it not be more effective if the missionary is trained in the receiving country itself? In this way he has an early start in getting to know the people, their culture and their language. I know how this has worked to great advantage in the case of an Asian couple who studied in one of our evangelical seminaries in India and serve as missionaries there.

3. They were disciple makers.

There is much emphasis on the specialists in missions today. There is the need for experts in literature, radio, medicine, etc. Sometimes these experts live in their own world even on the mission field. Every missionary must be in a disciple-making situation. Disciples cannot be made from a distance. This calls for a costly and deeper involvement with the people whom the missionaries are called to serve.

Finally, it must be said that three qualities are essential to every one involved in God's mission. They are VISION, FAITH and SACRIFICE. We have adopted these as the three pillars of our Indian Evangelical Mission. There must be a clear vision of God. His sovereignty and authority must be always kept in mind. Secondly, there must be total dependence on God and His resources. God's plan and will must be clearly discerned. Human projects and programmes should not take the place of waiting upon God to know His mind and His plan.

Sacrifice is the outworking of the paradox in mission. Life comes through death. This is the paradoxical principle of the Cross which was basic to the mission of Christ. We too cannot evade this principle. No method or strategy can be a substitute for this. Jesus said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies,

it bears much fruit." (John 12:24) This is the way of blessing and fruitfulness in mission. A veteran missionary who has put in many years of service in Asia said, "In Asia any Christian witness lacking enthusiasm and a spirit of sacrifice would have no chance of survival." Amy Carmichael, a great missionary who came to south India wrote,

"There is no gain except by loss
There is no life except by death."

32. The Challenge of Missions

The Other Side

After a time of intense teaching of the multitude and the disciples, our Lord turned to His disciples and said, "Let us go across to the other side" (Mark 4:35). He meant the other side of the Sea of Galilee.

In all His ministry, the Lord always carried a concern for the other side. At Christmas we remember that He left heaven's glory and came to the "other side" to man. Early in His ministry when Simon Peter and others with Him said to Him, "everyone is searching for you," He said to them, "Let us go on to the next towns that I may preach there also; for that is why I came" (Mark 1:36-38). In John 10:16, He said, "I have other sheep, that are not of this fold; I must bring them also." Other side, other towns, other sheep, these are His concern.

What was there on the other side that drew His ever-seeking Shepherd heart? We read of a man possessed with an unclean spirit living among the tombs (Mark 5:1-20). What a graphic picture of men and women without Christ and in bondage to sin and Satan! Note what is written about this man. He could not be bound by any one. Often he was bound with fetters and chains and he broke them all in pieces. No one had the strength to subdue him. Night and day he lived among the tombs. He sought his company among the dead because his life had no meaning for him. He was always crying out and bruising himself with stones. He did not know that he was destroying himself. The devil who controlled him led him to destroy himself. When Jesus drew near to him, he cried out with a loud voice and said, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me."

This is the picture of a man who is controlled by wrong desires and emotions. No one can control him. Nothing can control him. All man-made attempts to change him fail.

Do you know that there are many today who are in this same

condition? They are slaves to their own passions, slaves to drunkenness, ignorance and superstition. The devil holds them in bondage to himself. No one cares for them. They live in a world of their own, a world of spiritual death and mental torment. Yet, when they come in contact with the light of the Gospel they rebel against it. They oppose it violently. Their coldness and indifference is enough to discourage any missionary of the Gospel. Yet, they need help. They need the Liberator. This is "the other side."

On that "other side" we also see those who care more for their "swine" than for a poor, demented fellow human being. These are they who would oppose Christ and His Gospel because they pose a challenge to their selfishness, materialism and greed. The opposition to the Gospel is often instigated by commercial and selfish motives.

Jesus knew that on "the other side" all this awaited Him and yet He said, "Let us go across to the other side." This may be His call to you. He calls you to go with Him to "the other side." Crossing over the other side was not easy. In the middle of the sea, they were caught in a storm and were overwhelmed with fear. They had forgotten that He who called them to go across to the other side was with them and He had power over the sea and the wind.

"The other side" beckons us. It is the other side of those unreached islands in the Andamans, the other side of those tribes in Orissa and Madhya Pradesh who have not yet heard of the liberating Christ and the other side of these multitudes in Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Kashmir. There may be the storm, the opposition and the rejection from men's cold hearts. But remember, **the Saviour beckons you and He will be with you. Will you put your hand in His and say, "Lord where you lead me, I will follow?"**

33. The Missionary's Spiritual Life

Have you heard people say, "Please don't look at me, but look at the Lord?"

Is this practical? Is it scriptural? The answer is, "No." The great missionary, Paul, expected those whom he brought to the Lord to follow his example. "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1) "Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you" (Phil.3:17). Whether he likes it or not, the people among whom he works will follow the example of the missionary. In a certain part of South India, the Christians are great students and lovers of the Scriptures because the missionaries who labored in that area were students and lovers of the Scriptures.

The missionary's spiritual life is important because the believers follow his example.

Secondly, it is important because his primary call is to please his Lord. Our Lord said, "I seek not to please myself but him who sent me" (John 5:30). Paul wrote, "We make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it" (2 Cor. 5:9). The missionary's commitment is primarily to the Lord, and not to the mission field or to the people's group among whom he is working, or to his missionary service. This will give him a clear perspective and set right his priorities. It will mean missions in Christ's way and not, somehow. That will mean not being oriented to success at the expense of faithfulness, not ignoring means and motives for the sake of attaining the goals, not working for quantity at the expense of quality. It will mean concentrating on doing God's will rather than on achievements. It is possible to be worldly in doing missions.

The missionary's whole person must be considered when we think of his spiritual life. There is the physical dimension, the moral dimension, the relational dimension and then the spiritual dimension.

I. The Spiritual

1. Born Again
2. Consecrated
3. Trusting - Walking by faith® Dependent on the Lord
4. Obedient - Listening to the Lord ®Sensitive to His Direction
5. Rooted in the Lord and His resources (Psa. 1:3, Jer. 17:7, 8)® This is the secret of spiritual stamina and resilience (I Sam. 30:6).
6. Walking in the light (I John 1:7)®
7. Filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18, Col. 1:29) ® God makes us channels of the power of the Holy Spirit and not containers of power. Listening to Him, being led by Him, and depending on Him for His enabling is essential because we are engaged in a spiritual warfare.

II. The Moral

1. Inward integrity (Psa. 51:7) - "Sincerity in the heart, purity in the lips and God's Word in the tongue."
2. Courage (Acts 5:29)

III. The Relational

This includes relationships with fellow missionaries and mission leaders and with the people among whom we work.

1. God's love poured into our hearts (Rom. 5:5; I Cor. 13:4-7)
2. Stewardship of others (Matt. 24:45-51)
3. Acceptance (Rom. 14:1, 15:7)
4. Up building (Rom. 14:19, 15:2; Eph. 4:29)
5. Walking in the light (I John 1:7; Eph. 4:31, 32; Col. 3:13)

Oneness among the missionaries is a powerful force against Satan. (Matt. 18:18, 19; 12:29)

IV. The Physical

1. Discipline of the body and its appetites (I Cor. 9:27)
2. Stewardship of the body (I Cor. 6:19, 20).

To discipline the body is not to despise it. We may serve in cultures where the body is regarded as evil and therefore despised and tortured. The missionary should see that he is not influenced by the

culture and the lifestyle of the people around him so that he ignores his body and is careless regarding his health and his physical appearance. He must maintain health rules and sanitation principles, and be clean and neat, so as to be an example to the people in these matters. The same applies to the mind. Though he may live among non literate people, he should not allow his mind to deteriorate. He must maintain his study habits and intellectual sharpness.

In conclusion, it must be said that the missionary is not a finished product of God's grace. God is still at work in him. He has not graduated from God's school. He is in God's school and in God's service at the same time. We do not stand upon our perfection and minister to others. We stand on God's grace. In our fallibility and imperfection we can be transparent and sincere.

34. Consecration to God's Will

The book of Acts 13:36 says, 'When David had served God's purpose in his own generation he fell asleep, with his fathers and his body decayed.' Now this text was given by Paul. The Holy Spirit spoke through the apostle as he was giving this address, this sermon, this message in a synagogue in Antioch. So years after David had died these were the words the Holy Spirit wrote as an epitaph, words that we often write on a tombstone. What did the Holy Spirit say? There are many things that He could have said. He could have said he was a liar, a man who stole another man's wife and was forgiven. But the Holy Spirit did not say all that because as far as God was concerned, when something is forgiven it is forgotten. And so He doesn't treat us as those who have sinned but He sees us as those who have never sinned, as if we had never sinned. Isn't that marvelous? That is the grace of God.

One brother, speaking to me said, 'One of the hardest things for us evangelicals to do is to remember that all of us are saved by grace'- A faith in the grace of God- a religion of grace. We find it hard to forgive ourselves. We find it hard to forgive others. But here was a man of whom God could say that he served God's purpose, God's will in his own generation, nothing else. Everything else was blotted out, buried and the blood had covered it. God treated him as though he had never sinned. Child of God, will you live still with that guilt feeling, with that nagging conscience, with a sense of your sin and unworthiness or will you accept yourself as God has accepted you. Accept your forgiveness and leave this place as one who can serve your generation.

All of us have hope. So God's Word says here and the Holy Spirit wrote this as an epitaph that here was a man who fulfilled God's will, God's counsel, God's purpose in his own generation and that is what God expects of each one of us today. Ours is a great generation, it is a generation of tremendous possibilities and challenges. It is also a generation in which we have seen tremendous things happening, things which have never happened before are happening today. Let me just mention a few: There is a growth taking place in the Church of

Jesus Christ today as never before. The Church of Jesus Christ is growing. It is increasing.

Church Growth

I was very glad to hear it said that the percentage of Christians in India is three. From what God is doing today and from reports of church growth it can be very close to 3 or 3.5. We hope that in this decade it will increase to 10%.

But there are things happening in other places. You have heard of the church growth in Korea – 10%. In Singapore a tremendous growth of the church is taking place. In Indonesia, they are covering up the figures because of fear of opposition from Muslim groups, but they say it can be anywhere between 25-30% Christian. In China, there are 40-50 million Christians in that land which has been closed to foreign missionaries for so many years.

In Central America where you find hunger and civil war and uncertainty for missionary work, there the fastest church growth is taking place. 12.5% is the growth rate in Guatemala, more than even in Korea. In El Salvador the church is growing.

Africa is another continent of great happenings where the church is growing at such a rate that by the year 2000 AD the half of Africa will become Christian. So there are more people coming into the church today than ever before. Praise God for that. There are more missionaries on the field today than ever before. There are non-white missionaries, brown, black, yellow from Latin America, from Asia, from Africa, from all over reaching every part of the world for Christ. There may be 15,000-20,000 non western missionaries today serving Christ in different parts of the world.

Tremendous things are happening in Latin America. They met together in the end of 1984 in Mexico City and said that we would reach every country in Latin America with the challenge of missions. So throughout last year they began having and are to continue this year, mission consultations and conferences, similar to Operation World in every country of Latin America including Argentina,

Uruguay, Paraguay and all these countries. And then in 1987 November they are going to come together in Brazil for a continent wide congress on world mission. So there is a great mobilizing of the church and Christians in Latin America that is taking place. We are already seeing Latin American faces in many of our countries in Asia. Brazilians are here and others are coming out. There are more missionaries today than ever before.

Doing God's will in this Generation

But then it must also be said that there are more people unreached with the Gospel today than ever before and that is the generation in which we live. Now what is the challenge in this generation? It is to be the kind of man or woman that God wants you to be. Now don't be completely put out by all of this information. Sometimes when we get all of these figures and think of all the challenge and the need before us we say, 'what am I, what can I do?' As you bring it down to a simple thing what you are expected to do is just this. Do what God wants you to do in our generation. Will you do that? Now stop talking big. Some of us talk big but don't do anything. But instead of that it is better just to say, "God I'm not anyone great and my resources are limited and I am frightened, it is staggering. I do not know what I can do but one thing I will do; I will do what you want me to do." What does our text say? David served the will of God, or he fulfilled the will of God, he did the will of God in his generation. Now that's what we can do and all of us can do that.

There are some qualifications for this and I just want to point them out briefly.

- I. **A Common Man:** First of all we note here that David who did this was a very common man. Whom does God expect to serve in his generation or to do His will in this generation? It is common people. So all of us are included in that. In 1 Sam. 16 you read 'when Samuel was told he should go to the house of Jesse and anoint one of his sons, Samuel began to look for the tallest man, the most handsome man and the most smart looking man, and so Jesse brought about 7 of them and made them pass before Samuel. All

of them went one by one before Samuel. After 7 of his sons passed before Samuel, Samuel asked, 'Are these all the sons you have?' 1 Sam.16:11.

Now Jesse had forgotten one. Why? He wasn't like the others, impressive perhaps, and he was out there in the wilderness looking after the sheep. A young boy-the last one. Samuel said, 'Bring him here, we should not ignore anyone.' Then when he came, God said, 'He is the one, anoint him,' and isn't that marvelous that God does not go after the great, the tallest, the most handsome, the most smart and the most intelligent and the most educated? But He goes for the ordinary man, the common man. **It is ordinariness that God uses to fulfill His purpose.** So all of us qualify.

Brothers and Sisters I believe that by now the Holy Spirit has got through to you and He is saying 'don't say I cannot do it.' Don't tick yourself off. You will be sinning against God if you do that. Don't ever say, 'I feel inferior because of my family background or education, or the lack of it, because of my disqualification in this or that, because I have been a sinner and I am defiled.' Don't write yourself off. God wants you and will take you just as you are. Give yourself to Him, to do His will in this generation. A common man, but look what Samuel did to him. He anointed him with oil.

A Spirit-filled Man: Then the Scripture says, the Spirit of the Lord descended on him. You may be a common man but you must be a Spirit-filled man. You may be a common woman but you must be a Spirit-filled woman. One thing I like about George Verwer, he emphasizes all of this truth in Operation Mobilization. That is the necessity of being filled with the Spirit. It is a must for missions.

Now you believe something different from what I believe about being filled with the Spirit, which is not the important thing. Don't make much of things that should be kept at the fringe, manifestation, gifts and signs and feelings and emotions, but the fact is we must be filled with the Spirit. When you are born again you have the Holy Spirit coming to live in you and then when you seek for the Holy Spirit

to take complete control of your life and surrender yourself fully to Him, repent of all known sin in your life, ask Him to forgive you and cleanse you and ask Him to come on you, to take you over.

It is not that the Holy Spirit comes in where He did not live before; no you have had the Spirit in you when you were born again. But now He fills, you enter into a new relationship with Him. He liberates you, releases you so that all that you have is available to Him. There is a release that comes to your very personality. Something that has been wasted in self-centredness, in self pity, in lesser things, secondary things is now released. The Holy Spirit takes you and sets you on fire so that you become an ordinary wild bush, but it is a bush that is aflame. And that is how He uses our commonness.

He takes our commonness, our ordinariness but He puts His super-naturalness upon it. So that those who see know that I know him. I knew a man 20 years back. He was such a timid, shy, lean young man and I never thought he would turn out like this. Who is responsible for this? Your education in the US? You can go and have umpteen degrees from the US; it will not do it for you. There are some young people who think that if only they can have this degree or that degree they will be acceptable and they will have a standing. My brother, my Sister the only acceptability that you can gain is a moral and a spiritual acceptability. If you don't have it, nothing else will give you that acceptability. Nothing else will give you that authority.

Don't cheat yourself by saying that a little more education will give you that. If you can have that education, have it. Praise God for it, you need it. But that's not the thing you depend on. You depend on the anointing of the Spirit, the filling of the Spirit and if there is one thing you want to get, get it, but don't get into a bypass, don't let others come into the scene and confuse you, sidetrack you, lead you into wrong teachings and heresies. Go to God, go to the Scriptures and yield yourself to Him. The Holy Spirit will not leave you disappointed and He will not leave you confused and frustrated. Yes, we must be filled with the Spirit.

III. A Concerned Man: Then we notice in David's life he was a concerned man. When there were many others who were cool, lukewarm, he was stirred up; you find it in 1 Sam.17. Here was young David going to the battle front to take some food to his brothers. There he saw Goliath the Philistine coming out and challenging the armies of Israel, blaspheming the God of Israel. And as young David listened to it, he was stirred. He could not hear it. This is what he said in 1 Sam.17:26, 'Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?'

then he says also in verse 46, 'the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or by spear that the Lord saves, for the battle is the Lord's.' Think of the great concern and the burning passion of this young man. He said, 'How can I keep quiet when my God's honour is affected, when glory is not given to Him as it should be? The whole world must know about Him. The whole world must glorify God. He must be glorified in the whole world.' Now that was the passion he had.

Don't ever get used to human needs, whether it is hunger, or sins of violence or poverty or those who are spiritually lost who have never heard the Gospel. When you see them or hear about them don't ever get used to it. Be always stirred up in your heart.

Yes, 3 years after starting teaching in South Indian Bible Institute I heard about people who never had heard the Gospel 90 miles from Bangalore. I went on a journey taking a student with me. I was working at that time. What I saw stirred me and I took some more journeys into the jungles of Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and to the borders of India to Sikkim. I got stirred and it still stays with me. I trust that I will not lose it. My prayer to God is, take me home before it gets dark as that poem says, take me home before my passion grows dim, before my love for you grows cold, before my obedience to you becomes blunt, take me home because I can't bear to live once I've lost all of this. What is the use of living and serving and carrying on big titles and designations when the fire is not inside?

We should always be stirred. Stirred about what-statistics? No. Be stirred about the glory of God. Yes, lost humanity must touch us. But lost humanity alone is not enough to stir us. The glory of God. The glory of God is at stake and people worship idols, when there is rampant idolatry in my country, in Bihar, U.P., W. Bengal, the glory of God is at stake. How can I keep quiet? I'm stirred. Now that is the kind of man or woman that God will use. You may not be a fulltime worker but whoever you may be, be stirred with a concern for God's glory. That's what we find in this man David.

IV. A Consecrated Man: he was a consecrated man. What does consecration involve?

Consecration involves 3 things.

1. **Submission to God's will.** There is one thing about David that has impressed me and I trust it will impress you. You read in 1 Sam.23 David was hunted by Saul. On the one side Saul and on the other side the Philistines, he goes to God and asks Him 'Shall I go after the Philistines?' Another time he asks, 'Shall I go into this city, will they deliver me up to Saul?' David was an activist and so as an activist he should have done what needed to be done. Why go and ask God? And yet how much he depended on God's will! How much he took time to find out what God wanted him to do. Yes, there is a need to wait on God to find out God's will and to move in the direction in which God wants us to move.

You know I am a great admirer of Brother Bakht Singh. I know him personally and we have been together in a conference for 10 days staying in the same room. I don't accept all that he says, but I admire him, I appreciate him. He is a man of God. The thing that I admire about him is that he takes time to know God's will and to move in the direction which God wants him to move. It has kept him from many snares. One of my prayers for me and for the IEM and all my colleagues are this 'teach me your way Oh Lord, we are dumb, we are dull, we make mistakes and we rush where we should not rush, we lag behind when we should go forward. This is the raw material that we are made of, and yet God we don't want to do things in our own strength, in our

own wisdom. We want to do what you want us to do.' Brothers and Sisters, it is not me that matters but obedience to God's will, it is not your great achievements, but obedience to God's will.

Let us take the time to know what God is really asking us to do personally and then you will stir your generation. It doesn't matter in what obscure corner you are doing it and yet you will be fulfilling your role in doing what God wants you to do in your generation. There was one difference between him and Saul. Saul was a great activist, a man of great valour, but he never consulted God. Once he went and consulted a witch but David even in his times of failure, depended on God, he consulted God. That is the submission we are talking about.

2. **Sensitivity to sin.** Now you may talk so big about David but he was a sinner, plain old adulterer, murderer and liar. Yes he was all that. That's what gives me hope because I know what I am and yet this man by the grace of God could come out of it. Then when he wrote this psalm 51 his one prayer was not praying for forgiveness, he was not saying, 'God honour me before the people or Lord please don't let others know what I have done.' No, but his one concern in that psalm 51 was, "Oh God give me a pure heart, give me a teachable heart, behold you desire truth in the inward parts, and you are looking for wisdom in the hidden parts." This is what I want. I don't want to be insincere; I don't want to be foolish. I want to have sincerity within, integrity within and I want to be pure in my heart.

Brothers, sisters it is not great organization, it is not even numbers, let's beware of this. Just because we have said in this decade we want to see 10% reached, just because we have set up such goals, you don't become great. I'm not saying we should not set up numerical goals. God may lead you to do that, so you can do that under his direction, not in carnal enthusiasm. But then the important thing is 'Lord I want to be a man after your own heart. I want to have that integrity, that sincerity.' God is not going to pat me on the back and say, 'You've got

great goals man, I can't do without you, what can I ever do on this earth without you?' God is not going to say that. He will say, 'I can make out of these stones witnesses for me.' But let there be men and women who say to God, 'I want purity of heart, sincerity, inward discernment and wisdom.' Yes that is a part of consecration.

3. Surrender Complete surrender of all that he had and all that he was. One example of this is found in 2 Sam.23. David had many loyal followers and you know when God picks you up, when He begins to use you, particularly when you come into leadership, you have men and women who would be willing to give their lives for you. That's not because you deserve it. You know what you are, it's because of God's grace in their lives and because of their love for Jesus, and they love you and are devoted to you. They want to give themselves to you. But the danger is, whatever God gives to me as a blessing, I grab it. Whatever it is, whether its name or prosperity or peoples' lives, affection, devotion and friendship, we try to grab them and then comes the doom.

But three men said to David, 'you want water from the well in your own home town Bethlehem, fine. We will bring it for you. The Philistines are surrounding that place but we will risk our lives and go and bring that water.' So they went and brought that water and David took that water and he poured it out on the ground before the Lord and said, 'I will not touch this water because it represents the blood of these men, their lives, and I will not take it for myself, I will pour it out to the Lord.'

Oh for that grace, not to go about with a false humility. You know you can do that also, saying, 'No, I'm nobody, I'm humble.' And all the time inwardly you are thinking you are something else. That's not what I'm talking about. Receive what is given to you as bouquets of flowers and as garlands and lay them at the feet of the Master. Pour it out to Him, which is surrender. You may have things but hold them loosely; you can't escape having things, because sometimes they are thrust

on you. You don't seek after them but they are thrust on you. But when they are thrust on you don't make a fuss and don't pretend. Take it, hold it loose, and lay it on the altar.

4. **Sacrifice.** After what Christ has done on the cross, can we ever call anything a sacrifice? If Jesus Christ be God, and gave himself for me in such a way, what I do for Him or give for Him, can it be called sacrifice?' as C.T. Studd remarked. Yet there is a cost, there is a price. At one time David sinned and as a result there was a plague. Finally the plague was stopped and God appeared to him on a certain field. David wanted to build an altar there and offer burnt offerings. The man who owned the field said, 'I'll give you the land, I'll build you the altar, I'll give you the animals for sacrifice, even the firewood.' But David said, NO, I will not take something which costs me nothing and offer burnt offerings for my Lord. I believe in personal cost in obedience in consecration.' That's what David said.

Brothers, sisters, don't judge others. You do not know what price they are paying. You look at yourself and what price you are paying? The price may vary from time to time. We do not pay this entire price in one installment. It is regular payment or price. You know some of us think, I tended to think like that. Now I came out to serve the Lord in the midst of great opposition, my parents didn't accept me and I had to suffer financially and all of that. And I said, 'Lord I've done it. Let me sit and enjoy.' No, God is reminding me there is a continuous price. The price I paid ten years ago was different from the price I'm paying now. God may call you to pay the price in different installments at different times. You won't pay it all in one installment. But are you willing?

Unless you die

The Lord of the harvest was standing and looking at the land stretching out before him. He is yearning for a harvest in Bihar, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh. He had in His palm one little grain of wheat and he said to that grain of wheat, 'I depend on you. I want a harvest from these barren lands.' The grain

of wheat immediately jumped up in great enthusiasm because he had been to Operation World Conference and he said, 'Yes God I've got it all, from Frank Dietz, Alfie Franks, Ray Eicher, Juliet Thomas and from all of these people. I've got it. Now I can do it. I can go and preach, I can distribute tracts, I can show films. I can even have a Gospel satellite. You say it and I'll do it.'

The Lord of the harvest shook His head and said, 'No, no, you misunderstood me. Listen to me, before you talk listen to what I have to say. I want you to fall into the ground and die.' There was absolute stillness, no movement. The grain of wheat did not move because he was shocked when he heard this. The Lord of the harvest was waiting for a response. The grain of wheat slowly said, 'Lord you mean falling into the ground?' 'Yes.' 'You mean dying? No, no, it's not for me. How can I fall into the ground and face the darkness?'

35. Peter the Disciple

Jesus Christ had many devotees but only a few disciples. Even today there are many who follow him as devotees but he is always looking for disciples. Discipleship is costly. Peter was an important disciple of Jesus. Peter's discipleship can be studied under three headings.

1. Peter as Jesus discovered him-Defective Discipleship
2. Peter as Jesus dealt with him-Restored Discipleship
3. Peter as Jesus directed him-Continuing Discipleship

1. Peter as Jesus discovered him-Defective Discipleship

There are passages in the Gospels where we find the first contact that Jesus had with Peter. They are, chronologically arranged, John 1:35-42, Matthew 4:18-20 or Mark 1:16-18 and Luke 5:1-11. The first contact that Jesus had with Peter is the one mentioned in John 1:49-50. Only afterwards he met him near the Sea of Galilee and called him to come a fisher of men. After that, Peter went back to fishing. Then, Jesus met him again and called him, as recorded in Luke

It was Andrew who brought Simon to Jesus. Andrew was one of the first disciples of Jesus. He is always referred to in the Gospels as Peter's brother. He was just an ordinary man, known only as Peter's brother. He always stood in the shadow of Peter. Yet, it was he who brought Peter to Jesus. There are some people who will not do anything because they cannot do everything. There are others who will do something though they cannot do everything. Andrew did what he could. He introduced his own brother to Jesus. This proved out to be a very significant event because Peter became a disciple of Jesus Christ. We also note that Andrew was just one link in the chain that led Peter to Jesus. Peter must have been a disciple of John the Baptist and as such he was influenced by John's teachings. John was the first link in the chain. Then came Andrew.

Sometimes we may be just one link in the chain that leads a person to Christ. We have to accept this joyfully. If we are the first link, we

may never see immediate result. We need not be discouraged at this. If we are the last link, we may see immediate result. We need not be proud of this because there might have been many other influences at work on the person before we contacted him.

When Jesus met Simon, he "looked" at him. The word "looked" here means not just a casual glance, it is a penetrating look. Jesus looked at him as though he saw his very soul. Then he said, 'So you are Simon the son of John?' 'Simon' means 'sand', something that is inconsistent or unstable. You cannot build anything out of mere sand. It does not hold together. It falls apart. Sand lacks consistency. Jesus tells us what we are. He is very honest in his dealings with us. He does not flatter us or demean us. It is true love which tells us what we are in ourselves. By bringing someone across your life's pathway, he may let you see who you are. He may tell us, "You are short-tempered," "You are self-centred," "you are proud," or he may allow certain circumstances in our life which will reveal to us who we really are. Our sinfulness, our unbelief and our selfishness are all revealed to us by our faithful Saviour.

But he did not stop there. He also told Simon, "You shall be called Cephas." The word 'Cephas' is Aramaic and the word 'Peter' is Greek. Both mean 'rock.' Jesus told Simon, "You are sand and you shall become rock." Sand and rock are made up of the same basic substance. Yet, one is inconsistent and the other is solid and stable. Out of the same raw material, Jesus will turn an inconsistent person to a stable person. He sees us as we are and then sees the possibilities in us. He loves us not only for what we are but for what we can become by his grace. Only He the great sculptor, where others saw only a crude piece of rock, he saw a masterpiece of art.

Once he took a crude piece of rock which others had rejected. The moment he saw the rock, he saw in it the image of David the shepherd boy. It was out of this crude rock that he carved his masterpiece, David the Shepherd boy. The disciple Peter whom Jesus discovered was an inconsistent, unstable failing follower. For three and a half years he was with Jesus. Again and again Jesus revealed to

him his defective discipleship. There are at least 3 defects we note in Peter's discipleship.

1. First of all, it was **distracted discipleship**. Peter did not keep his eyes on Jesus as he followed Him. At one time, he said to Jesus, "Lo, we have left everything and followed you" (Mark 10:28). He looked back at what he had left behind. There are some who are always looking back with regret at all that they have left behind in order to follow Jesus. The sinful pleasures and the attractions of the world which they have left behind still have a pull on them. They keep looking back, constantly longing for what they have left behind. The people of Israel were like this after they started the journey to the Promised Land. They looked back to Egypt and longed for the things they enjoyed there. There are others who look at all that they have left behind and ask, "What shall we get now that we have left behind so much for Christ?" They are constantly thinking of what they will get because of what they have given up. It is to such that Jesus says, "No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:62).

Peter not only looked back. He also looked around. When Jesus came walking on the water to the boat where the disciples were, Peter took the initiative and began to walk on the water to go to the Master. But he looked around and seeing the wind and the waves, he was afraid and began to sink (Matthew 14:28-30). Instead of looking at the wind and the waves, he should have kept his eyes fixed on the Lord. Distracted discipleship looks at circumstances and gets discouraged. Sometimes we look at other people. The risen Christ met Peter near the sea of Tiberias and renewed his love and His commission.

Then we read in John 21:21 that Peter saw John following them and said to Jesus, "Lord, what about this man?" Often we fix our eyes on other disciples and question why we are not treated like them or why we do not have what they have. We fail to realize that our Lord deals with each one of us in a unique way.

We cannot understand His dealings with others. We must keep our eyes on Him and walk in the path which he has ordained for us. Jesus said to Peter, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me." In other words, Jesus told Peter, "Peter, mind your own business and follow me." How appropriate that advice is!

A distracted discipleship that looks back or looks around is defective discipleship. It is bound to fail. This is what we find in Peter. What about our discipleship?

The basis of all of God's dealings with us is love. We think often that when God gives, it is love and when He takes, it is not love. When He speaks to us tenderly, it is love and when His Word hurts us, it is not love. This is not a correct understanding of God's love. It is love's sincerity that lets us know what we are in ourselves. It was love which looked Peter through and through and told him, "You are sand." When Peter lived and worked with Christ his discipleship was not what it should have been. In spite of his zeal and his loud confessions, his discipleship was a defective discipleship. We have already seen that it was **distracted discipleship**.

2. **Hesitant discipleship.** Peter did not allow some areas of his life to be brought under the demands of discipleship. Caesarea Philippi was noted for its idolatry and temples. There were temples for the Greek gods, the Canaanite gods and for the Roman emperor. In such an environment Jesus brought his disciples and asked them, "Who do you say that I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Peter made a great confession. Jesus showed His appreciation of him by saying, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 16:13-23). Afterwards our Lord began to speak about His sufferings, death and resurrection.

As soon as he heard, Peter took Him and began to rebuke Him

saying, "God forbid, Lord! This shall never happen to You." Immediately Jesus turned and said to him, "Get behind me Satan! You are a hindrance to me; for you are not on the side of God, but, of men." Just a moment ago, He told Peter, "Blessed are you" but now He says, "You are a hindrance to me." Just a moment ago, He said to him, "Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven" but now He said, "You are not on the side of God."

It is possible to make a great confession and yet slip down to become a great hindrance. It is possible to receive a great revelation from God and yet backslide to a place of opposition and resistance to God. When the total demands of discipleship are not faced and accepted, this is what will happen. No matter what wonderful spiritual experiences we have had, if we step out of God's will, we become Satan's instruments. For a moment Peter had become an instrument of Satan.

In Matthew 17:1-8 we read about another incident involving Peter. Jesus took Peter, James and John to a high mountain and there He was transfigured before them. It was a glorious sight. Moses and Elijah appeared and were talking with Jesus. Peter was greatly moved at all these happenings. He blurted out, "Lord, it is well that we are here; if you wish I will make three booths here, one for me, one for you and one for Elijah." He wanted the glory of the mountaintop but not the cross of Calvary. Peter had not faced the full implications of discipleship. He had not counted the cost and accepted the terms of discipleship. Jesus calls us to count the cost of discipleship.

He said, "Which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?" (Luke 14:28). Peter loved to be in the forefront when Jesus taught the crowds and did miracles. He was the first to answer His questions, the first to confess his faith openly and the first to walk on the water. He loved the limelight and liked to do something exciting and adventurous for the Lord. But he

never wanted to suffer with Him and for Him. If discipleship can be judged by mere words, Peter had it. But he could not face all its demands. There was no place for the cross in his discipleship. Jesus said, "Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:27). A discipleship which has no place for the cross is bound to fail. That is why Peter's discipleship ended in shameful denial of his Master.

How often this is true of our discipleship! We want the wonderful things that Jesus can do for us. We want the exciting experiences of life with Him. But we do not want to suffer for His sake. Even a slight inconvenience, opposition or mockery puts us off. We grumble and get discouraged. Often we want to give up and run away. An unwillingness to go all the way with Christ can often lead to failure. A young Christian girl fell in love with a non-Christian boy. She was very active in the church when she met this boy. She knew that this relationship was contrary to the teaching of God's Word for the Bible says, "Do not be mismatched with unbelievers" (2 Corinthians 6:14). Many mature Christians advised her not to continue this friendship.

But she was not willing to face the demand of discipleship at this point. She did not want to pay the price. She argued that she would try to convert him and thus win a soul for the Lord! For her sake, he did consent to become a Christian. There was no work of the Holy Spirit in his heart; it was only an outward step. After her marriage, she lost her love for the Lord and slowly drifted away from Him. The young man took to his old evil ways. Very soon the home was wrecked and they were separated.

Why did Peter shun the cross? The cross challenges our accepted ideas of God and service to Him. He could not accept a God who can bring victory out of defeat. Jesus said, "Whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it" (Mark 8:35). Gain out of loss, life out of death, victory out of defeat-this is what the cross stands for. This is not easy for natural man to accept. Also, the

cross challenges our natural desire for security. It challenges our natural tendency to stand up for our rights. The cross cuts across all that is natural. It is only as we allow the cross to operate in our lives that we can live the supernatural life of discipleship. A hesitant discipleship that shuns the cross and refuses to accept all the demands of discipleship is defective discipleship.

Failure is never sudden in spiritual life. It is a gradual process leading to downfall. Failure has its beginning somewhere in secret. That is why someone has said, "Discipline the beginnings and the end will take care of itself." Sometimes we see a huge tree fallen across the road early in the morning. There was no strong wind or heavy rain during the night and yet the tree has fallen down. A closer look at the tree reveals the cause of this fall. The tree has been eaten away inside by the beetles and insects. No one knew this. Everyone saw only the luxuriant foliage and the strong trunk. But inwardly the life of the tree had been eaten away little by little over a period of time. This is what happens when our discipleship is defective. A defective discipleship is dangerous. It will lead to spiritual failure as in the case of Peter.

3. **Unsubmissive discipleship.** Peter had a strong will and it was not easy to yield it to Christ. Also, temperamentally He was independent and aggressive. The ancient Greeks have classified human temperaments into four categories. There are the sanguine, the melancholic, the choleric and the phlegmatic. Each temperament has its weak points as well as strong points. We are not responsible for the kind of temperament we have. That is the way God has made us. The weak points of a temperament are not sinful in themselves. But they can become an avenue of temptation and cause a person to sin. The weakness of the sanguine temperament is that the person is forward and impulsive. He is ready to lead but slow to follow.

But in Christian discipleship one must be a good follower, the

follower of our Lord. It is a good follower who makes a good leader. Paul wrote, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1). Peter can be classified as sanguine in temperament. He was the first one to answer any question that Jesus asked. He was the first one to confess who Jesus was and he was the first one to imitate the Master and walk on the water. He was a good 'first man' but he was not a good follower. Jesus had to remind him again and again, "Follow me" (Matthew 4:19, John 21:19, 22).

Following involves submission and that was what Peter lacked.

- i. **First of all, Christ calls us to submit to His dealings.** When Jesus met with the disciples in the upper room for the last supper, He did something very significant. It was the usual custom for the host to provide water for the guests to wash their feet when they come to a dinner. None of the disciples cared to do that in this case. Each one was afraid lest he would be considered the servant of the others. So no one stirred out of his place to wash the feet of others. The Master took the basin of water and the towel and began to wash their feet. When he came to Peter, Peter asked, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" and then he protested saying, "You shall never wash my feet." While the other disciples submitted to the washing of their feet by the Master, Peter would not submit even after Jesus said, "What I am doing you do not know now, but afterward you will understand" (John 13:1-10).

Many times we do not understand what our Lord is doing in us or to us. There is mystery in God's nature and there is also mystery in His dealings with men. Otherwise, He cannot be God. At such times, we are called to submit to his dealings even though we may not understand them. We can trust His character and submit to Him though we may not be able to trace His dealings. God may take us through many inexplicable circumstances. Are we willing to accept His dealings with us? Can He trust us enough so that He may deal with us according to His own plan?

Before Peter denied Jesus, the Master tried many times to draw his attention to the fact that Peter would deny Him. But Peter was too busy asserting his loyalty to listen to the warnings. Boastfully he declared that even if the other disciples denied Jesus, he would not deny Him. There was no teachability, no willingness to accept warning and correction. This is a very serious failure in discipleship. God knows us better than we do. He often brings us in touch with certain circumstances and with certain people so that we can discern our own spiritual needs and seek His help and strength. If we are pre-occupied with ourselves and are insensitive to His dealings, we lose the opportunity to learn from Him.

Jesus also calls us to submit to His leadings. Peter denied his Master and fled from Him at the crucifixion because he did not want to follow Him to the cross. He would not submit to His leadings completely. He would go so far and no further. But after the resurrection when Jesus restored him to true discipleship, He said, "When you were young, you girded yourself and walked where you would; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go" (John 21:18). True discipleship is not expressed in endless activities for the Master but in knowing and doing His will. Jesus Christ is not calling for activists but for followers. There are many who are willing to run without being commissioned. They do not wait for His command but are willing to go. The value of what you do for Christ is measured by the fact of your following Him in what you do. True discipleship sings, "Where He leads me I will follow. I'll go with Him all the way."

Submission to Christ's will also involves submission to others. Sometimes God expects us to submit in certain situations so that we may not cause others to stumble. In Matthew 17:24-27, there is an incident involving Peter and Jesus. The temple tax collectors came to Peter for the tax. This was an annual tax of half a shekel given by every male Jew between the ages of 20 and 50 for the maintenance of the Jerusalem temple. Jesus told Peter that as His

disciples they were not under divine obligation to pay it because they belonged to the kingdom of God which had come. However, out of consideration for their fellow Jews who would be offended if they did not pay this tax, he should pay it voluntarily. In Christian discipleship, there is a submission, a giving in and a yielding in order to avoid causing others to stumble.

A key word in discipleship is **submission**, submission to Christ and submission to circumstances and people in His will.

36. Victory over Sin

Taken from 'The More Excellent Way (digest of Christian Holiness)
edited by Theodore & Esther Williams,
published by the India Holiness Association, 1986.

A survey was taken in a small town on domestic relationships. One question in the questionnaire was, "Who is the cause of all the quarrels in your home?" It is easy to answer that question by saying, "My wife" or "My husband", "My children" or "My parents." But one man was pricked in his heart when he read that and with much hesitation he wrote the answer, "I am." The great evangelist D L Moody once said, "I have had more trouble with myself than with any other man I ever met." This is what most of us would confess in our moments of honesty.

1. The problem that causes sin

The unsundered self is the cause of all our spiritual problems. Just as the fingers are rooted in the palm of our hand, our sins are rooted in the palm of the unsundered self. When we use the word "self" we are not referring to the natural, human self. That is the true self with which we are created. It gives us personal identity and our personhood. That is nothing wrong with that self. God does not want to negate or destroy that self. The self we are referring to is the sinful, carnal self. It even hinders our acceptance of our natural self. As this self William Law said, "This self is the devil's peculiar workshop, the citadel of Satan in the soul." It was said of a man, "Wherever the old man goes, he casts a shadow of himself before. He is constantly occupied with photographing himself and developing the plates."

1. The Sinful Self discovered

In Romans 6:6 it is called "our old self," that is, the old man, in contrast with the new nature given by the Holy Spirit. In the same verse it is also called "the sinful body." In Romans 7:17 Paul calls it "the sin which dwells within me." In Romans 7:18 he calls it "the flesh" and in Romans 7:23 "the law of sin which dwells in my members" and in Romans 7:24 "the body of

death.” The problem here is not the **penalty of sin** but the **power of sin**. The issue is not **damnation** but **defilement**. This is the problem of the converted man and not of the unconverted man. Only the believer can be aware of the intensity of this problem.

There seem to be two centres in the believer. One is God and the other is the sinful self. The choices, decisions, attitudes, reactions and thoughts that make up his life group themselves around these two centres forming patterns of life which are partially self-centred and partially God-centred. However, there cannot be two centres in one person. Self-centredness is the basic problem. Right in the middle of the word SIN is the letter 'I'. This is the cause of all sin. Why does a man steal? It is to gain something for the self. Why does he lie? It is to protect the self. Why does he get angry? It is because the self has been crossed. Why does he get jealous? Because someone is getting ahead of the self and its security is threatened. Why does he yield to impurity? It is to gain pleasure for the self.

This sinful self manifests itself in many ways. It manifests itself not only in **self-seeking** but also in **self-love**. A man can be in love with himself. It was said of a university professor that he was “a self-made man who worshipped his creator!” **Self-assertion** is dominating others, talking about one and bragging about one's achievements. **Self-indulgence** is being dominated by one's own desires and appetites. **Self-justification** is being slow to apologize, finding it difficult to admit one's mistakes and always justifying oneself. **Self-sufficiency** is never recognizing one's need of God and depending on one's own smartness and efforts. A little girl was singing to herself in her room while the mother was in the kitchen. The mother smiled as the girl sang, “Count your blessings, name them one by one and it will surprise the Lord what you have done.” Then there is also **self-will**. C S Lewis said that there are only two groups of people in the world. The first group prays, “Not my will but Thine be done” and they are already enjoying heaven. The second group

consists of those to whom God says, "Not Thy will but mine be done" and they are already in hell.

2. **The Sinful Self disowned**

One danger is that we never come to the place of disowning our sinful self though we have discovered it. The Lord brings it to our attention through defeat and failure in our circumstances and in our relationships. Through our sinful attitudes and reactions we discover who we really are. When we discover our sinful self, we must disown it and seek deliverance from it. Often we take defeat as a part of our normal experience and accommodate it. A successful baseball player once said, "I don't believe in adjusting myself to defeat." It is a deadly philosophy which says you have to be defeated now and then."

Paul discovered his problem and confessed his helplessness. "I am carnal, sold under sin" (Romans 7:14). "I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do" (Romans 7:19). But then he did not get reconciled to his condition. He cried out, "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Romans 7:24).

The power that conquers sin

Paul asked the question, "How can we who died to sin still live in it?" (Romans 6:2) and answered it saying, "If we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his" (Romans 6:5). The secret of victory over sin is in identification with the Cross of Christ. There are three steps in winning this victory through the Cross.

1. Know

"We know that our old self was crucified with him" (Romans 6:6). On the Cross our sinful self was crucified with Christ. Christ not only took upon himself the penalty of our sin but also our sin itself. Not only our acts of sin but our sinful nature itself was crucified with Him. This fact is stated in Scripture. We must know this if we are to have victory over our sinful nature. Our victory is based on the work of Christ on the Cross. That is why Paul shouted in triumph immediately after his

cry of helplessness, "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Romans 7:25) and went on to say, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).

To know this is not a mere intellectual acceptance of the fact. It is grasping by faith what God has revealed as fact. The Holy Spirit opens our eyes to realize that we are dead with Christ to sin. Hudson Taylor, the missionary hero knew this as a truth in his mind. But one day it dawned on him as a glorious reality. He realized that it could become a fact of experience. It was then that the deliverance from the bondage of self came.

2.Reckon

"Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:11 KJV). The word "reckon" is rendered "consider" in RSV and "count" in NIV. This is the second step. Having accepted by faith the fact that our sinful self was crucified with Christ on the Cross, we must now accept it as a fact of experience. When that sinful self exerts its control over us, we must realize that we are dead to it in Christ. A corpse is not affected by the seductions of sin or by provocations to anger and jealousy. We must remember that we too are dead to sin. We must take sides against the sinful self and renounce it.

In this reckoning the will is involved. We take a decisive stand on the fact that the self is crucified with Christ on the Cross. It is not acting as if we are dead. It is also not feeling as if we are dead. We stand on God's Word and accept the fact that we are once for all dead to sin. The word "reckon" being in the aorist tense in Greek stands for a decisive reckoning. Not only do we consider ourselves dead to sin but we also accept that we are alive only for Christ. Our new life has a new centre which is Christ.

3.Yield

"Do not yield your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but yield yourselves to God as men who have been

brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments of righteousness" (Romans 6:13). After we have accepted by faith the fact that our sinful self was crucified with Christ and having realized that it is a fact of experience, we surrender ourselves to God to fulfill His purpose. To be "instruments of righteousness" is to fulfill His purpose. Once the sinful self is considered dead with Christ, our natural self set free from its bondage to the sinful self is identified with the risen Christ and surrendered to Him. Then the Holy Spirit cleanses our hearts, fills us and leads us in victory.

IX. Missions and Leadership Style

37. Servant Leader

We're going to look at the scripture, 1Cor.9:19-23, 'Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew to win the Jews. To those under the law, I became like one under the law, though I myself am not under the law so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law though I am not free from God's law but I am under Christ's law so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the Gospel that I may share in its blessings.'

For the sake of the Gospel

That expression, 'for the sake of the Gospel,' was impressed upon me some years back. In fact we used it as a theme, I think in Richmond Town Methodist Church when I was a pastor there for one of our missionary conferences. It's a good theme, For the sake of the Gospel. It cuts right across all of life's values, choices, decisions, directions for the sake of the Gospel. I do all this for the sake of the Gospel.

Sometimes we can write that even across our experiences. I think all of us are human so it's natural. We have a tendency to get discouraged and grumble, 'why am I bearing all these things, enduring all these things, why am I going through all these things?' Now you write across all these experiences-all this for the sake of the Gospel. Immediately it's transformed isn't it? You're not enduring it because of some fate or because of some people or their mistakes or their wrong decisions but you are enduring it for the sake of the Gospel. So to write all across all of life's experiences also -all this for the sake of the Gospel.

I. Leader-First among Equals

Today we're going to think about the servant leader. Why do I become a servant? It's all for the sake of the Gospel. That is Paul's

answer. There is no virtue in humiliation or humiliating oneself or allowing others to humiliate but there is every virtue when it is for the sake of the Gospel. The servant leader-now that again is a unique concept. I've been pointing out to you how different our concepts of Christian leadership are from our secular concepts of leadership. There is a book which came out quite some time ago called, 'The Servant Leader,' published by Robert Greenleaf, he's a Catholic and it's published by a catholic press and of course he doesn't deal with Scripture much there. His whole thesis in that book is his idea of leadership in a team or the concept of a leader as first among equals and not one who sits on the apex of a pyramid.

He contrasts the pyramidal structure. There is one on top and then everything is passed on down below at various levels, but instead he talks about a structure where it's a spread-out thing, a team working together with one as first among equals because there has to be one. Usually if it's a husband and wife, one has to be the leader. So that is first among equals. So he is developing that concept more there than even the idea of servant hood.

But in the Scriptures you find the whole idea of servant hood developed. Now I want to point out one thing to you. It's good for us to go through management techniques, seminars and training, but a word of caution. That there is quite a lot published in the west not only by secular authors but even evangelical Christian authors, all of which is not for our consumption. We can read but we have to discern and discriminate. So even those of us who study these books, and attend leadership lectures and management seminars, should be willing to sift and accept only what is acceptable.

Values

one-culture, because we must be careful that we don't imbibe the cultural values of the west because we have to look at some of these techniques and some of these ideas from our own cultural background **Secondly**, regarding Scripture-whether it is scripturally tenable, acceptable. That also we must note. I'm not saying that we shouldn't read those books, look at those notes or attend those seminars but let's be discerning, discriminating. So

we are safe as long as we bring scriptural principles. Of course they also bring out scriptural principles. We have to see it in the light of the total teaching of Scripture and the total emphasis of Scripture.

Let me just point out to you things which we have to keep in mind, some distinctions. Any day faithfulness is more important than success. Now this will be very difficult to accept for the average American even for the evangelical American because there seems to be such an overwhelming tendency to worship at the shrine of success. Now we have to watch again, that doesn't mean that we have to be satisfied in lack of success or mediocrity or smaller, lesser goals, no. We have to attempt great things for God, expect great things from God and we have to trust Him for success. Success is not our all-consuming purpose.

2. Importance of Time/Human Relationships?

Then of course, time as contrasted with or set against human relationships. Most of the western managerial techniques will emphasize time and not give so much importance to the value of human relationships. But to us in the non-west whether it is in Africa or Asia, relationships are more important. In Africa I believe when they have their palavers i.e. when the whole tribe meets together and talks about some issues, they'll talk and talk but they won't come to a conclusion because the setting up of proper relationships and proper attitudes is more important. Say lets sleep over it and then come and talk about it next. Now to a westerner that may be wasted time, because you put down points 1,2,3 and make a decision and then the next day you get into action.

The same is true of the Japanese. If you have to do business with the Japanese you don't get to the first point very easily because all those preliminary courtesies have to be gone through. You have to be bowing to each other sometimes and then all these sort of things. But that's not again a waste. So culturally discern, there is a value in this. Of course the Scriptures also point out what our Lord did, taking time for people. So there must be a thing understood in that way. Am I going to follow a rigid timetable

without any provision for interruptions or am I going to make room along the way for some relationships? So that is another thing to keep in mind.

4. **Goals Means as important as Ends**

Then the other thing which we have to keep in mind which any Christian whether he is western or eastern would agree is that to us the means are as important as the goals. Sometimes in so much emphasis on managerial techniques we forget that the means are as important as well as the goals. How we achieve it, how we achieve church growth, how we achieve efficiency, how we accomplish what we are set to accomplish is as important as what we accomplish. These are principles which we keep in mind. So in that category this whole concept of servant leadership should be set and fitted in because if you look at it purely in terms of efficiency, success, drive and excellence you don't see much room for this servant leadership. But if you see it in the concept of scripture in the light of the example of our Lord or Paul, then you see there is a place for this. That is why I said this is uniquely scriptural.

5. **Unconscious Humility**

How is this servant leadership executed, demonstrated? It is not demonstrated with an ostentatious show or display. That is one thing we have to watch. Everybody is so conscious of your humility, they're not conscious of anything else. That's exactly what I or you wanted to do. We wanted everybody to see so that everybody could see that you are a great servant or a humble person. Now that kind of an ostentatious show is obnoxious. That will not accomplish anything. But there is an unconscious act, when you are not conscious of what you are doing, you're not even standing up and saying, 'Look what I did. Because of this I did that.' You don't talk about it, you don't even think about it but unconsciously in your actions and attitude it is manifested.

The classic example for this is, you remember what our Lord did in John 13 in the upper room. Was there any show; was there any pomp about it? Just in the natural course of things He waited to see if these fellows would wash their feet. None of them had

washed and none of them had offered to wash for others. Because it's their custom that as they came in, the man who invited the guests for dinner, his slave would stand there and pour water and wipe their feet and help them to wash their feet. But here who was the host and who were the guests? They were all together in it and there was no place to wash their feet. In fact, one of them should have taken the initiative and helped in that, but none of them thought about it or even if they thought about it, probably they would say, 'why should I wash other's feet, they will take advantage of me.' So they completely ignored it. Jesus just naturally took it upon Himself. He didn't announce it 'I'm going to do this,' or he didn't even say that though He had come from such a high place, that He was doing it for their sake. No later of course He gave them a lesson on that. But without being conscious of it, in a natural way, He started doing that. And that began to speak to them. Then He began to teach on the basis of that. So that is the kind of servant leadership we are talking about. Unconsciously expressed, unconsciously executed, and unconsciously demonstrated, not with an ostentatious show or pomp.

II. Principles for Servant Leaders

There were 3 principles involved in it-those of **availability**, **authority** and **accountability**.

1. Availability of Servant Leader

i. To People

Availability: A servant leader is available. Now this creates a lot of problems for us. Particularly as your responsibilities increase and as your workload increases, how available can you become? This is one of the areas in which I suffer. I'm not able to give time to people, and then I feel guilty. I'll just give you one plain example. In Raipur on Saturday night I was completely washed out during our convention. And it had been a hard day though I did not preach more than twice, but preaching every time was a big trial and so I was completely worn out and already several people had come and talked, and we had the time of counseling after the meeting. I didn't counsel, others counseled. Then at 10.30 at

night I thought, now here I am all by myself, time is for me, now I can relax. There was a knock at the door. Someone had somehow found out my room number and there were two of them, and they said 'we want to talk to you.' I just could not do anything more because even if I talked to them I would not have been at my best. When you're tired there's no point in compelling yourself to counsel anyone. Because the advice to counselors is, when you're tired you don't counsel. It's better to tell people to come at some other time or refer them to someone else.

That's exactly what I did, I said, 'I'm tired I'm not well. One of my teammates will be able to talk to you.' However I don't know whether I was understood or not. I never saw them again. Probably they left the next morning. Not because they were offended, they might have had some other business. I felt guilty about it. Did I do the right thing? Have I missed an opportunity?

So we do have that tension about how much time to give, when to give and whom to give. Then there are always those who take advantage of you. They come and you find all they're interested in is getting a job for their daughter. That has happened right here. Someone else could have talked to that person and sent him/her off. So there are these problems. So when we talk about availability what are we emphasizing? Does it mean we should be available at all times to all people, irrespective of any situation? No that's not what is implied here.

But there are certain principles and for that let us again turn to Scripture. In the Gospel of Luke 17 there is a parable which is the parable of a slave here. Luke 17:7-10, 'Suppose one of you had a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. The servant here is a slave that is the word here, a bond-slave. Would he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, 'Come along now and sit down to eat?' Would he not rather say, 'Prepare my supper. Get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink. After that you may eat and drink.' Now look at that whole incident. How heartless and thoughtless the master was. We are told not to look at that in the parable.

As I said yesterday, 'There's only one lesson, main lesson in a parable.

The example here is not the Master, but the servant. So we're not to look at the heartlessness or the thoughtlessness of the Master. But we have to look at the servant. Here he comes after a tiring day in the field, and then the Master doesn't ask him to come and eat. He doesn't say to him, 'You go and cook your food and eat. You must be tired. You must be hungry. Go and eat.' The Master never notices the need of the servant. He never notices the condition of the servant. He has no eyes for that, he has no thought for that. All that he says is, 'You prepare food for me.'

ii. Available in spite of my Need

That happens to us doesn't it? It happens as I said when I talk about leaders; it doesn't mean only those in responsibilities or in high positions. All of us are leaders in a sense. When you are influencing others, when you are trying to win others to Christ, relate to others in that sense, you are a leader, you have an influence. Now this happens to us. Our needs are not recognized. We see people so heartless. That was a thought that came to me, almost giving me some anger, 'Why aren't they more thoughtful? They don't know that I have worked hard throughout this day and I have had a long evening. Why should they come and knock at ten thirty? All they care is only for themselves because they have a problem and they want to get it off their chest. Why don't they think of me?'

I thought like that and we think like that. Why can't this man think of my needs? We say that about a leader who asks us to do something. Doesn't he know that I have a headache; I've come to the office with a headache? Doesn't he know that I'm having a family problem? Doesn't he know that I have this need? Servant hood means availability even in my needs. Not put my needs first because your needs may not always be seen. Sometimes your needs are not seen because people don't have the ability to see through what is not easily visible. So you may be suffering from headache, fever or some

emotional depression and you come and here a job is given to you. The person who gives you the job doesn't have a clue what you're going through. Of course if he's sensitive he can, if he's close to the Spirit, sometimes he can. But if he's not, then what do you do? Why doesn't he see my need? Why should I do this? The temptation comes to all of us. At such time, available in spite of my need. Not to put my need first but to put my availability to my master first and to my Lord first. So that's what this slave did. Not my hunger, not my tiredness, but my master's wish, my master's will.

Secondly he said, 'you wait on me while I eat and drink. After that, you may eat and drink.' Now that is also very heartless, isn't it? He could have easily asked him to sit with him and eat. Or he could have said, 'While I eat, you go and eat.' He said, 'no I will eat. You just sit and watch.' Now it's almost like an animal isn't it? No humanness in it at all. Yet the master is not condemned, because that's not our attention. Our attention should be on the servant. So irrespective of what the master did. Here the ordinary rights and privileges are also ignored. Now he has done what he can, he has served him. He has prepared the food and served him. Now it is his right to go and eat, to attend to his needs. After you have attended to the needs of others, can you not attend to your needs? After you have done your job for the Lord, can you not take care of your matters? Sometimes even that has to be set aside, even our rights, our privileges. So there should be availability in spite of all that.

iii. Available at all conditions

Then a third thing, you notice again in that verse. Verse 9: Would he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? Now after all this, does he look at him and say 'thank you?' I know you've been tired, you've been hungry and yet you've prepared this food for me. You waited for me all this time. I appreciate it, I thank you. Now you go and eat. Did he say that? No. I think this man just sat there, and ate and drank and walked off. That poor fellow later had to go and eat and received no appreciation, no thanks.

Sometimes we put our fulfillment, our joy first. Because when you're appreciated you have joy, when you're thanked you have joy. So our availability is conditional on all of this. Availability conditioned by my needs, conditioned by my rights, conditioned by my fulfillment, my joy and all this is right, then I'm available. But the availability of a servant leader or for that matter a servant slave is not conditioned on any of these things. Available to the master at all times, at all conditions, in all situations.

That's not easy. But that is what we're told here in the Scripture. This availability sometimes is conditioned as I said, by our feelings. I want to point out here something which is my battle ground also. There is a certain amount of subjectivity in all of us. I have it and you have it. What is subjectivity? I'm conditioned by my own feelings, by my own moods or by my emotions. So it affects my decisions, it affects my activity; it affects so many things in my work, in my ministry, in my leadership.

iv. Subjectivity a Hindrance

Suppose I base my decisions and my choices purely on my subjective feelings, I cannot be a good leader. That is where, as I earlier pointed out, objectivity comes and objectivity is provided sometimes by an external body, a committee, or other leaders and authorities over us who can see things from a different perspective. That can deliver us from subjectivity. So we have to submit sometimes to others in leadership. The person who says, 'why should I work with a committee, why work in an organization, why submit to others?' does not know what he's talking about because he's in grave danger of being subjective in all his decisions. Take for instance the authority of revelations that people talk about today, 'I had this vision,' 'I had this dream,' and 'the Lord spoke to me.' Much of it is subjective.

If you carry on your ministry purely on the basis of your revelations, and your visions and your personal, subjective guidance you may go wrong. We all need check and counter-check of a group, of a fellowship. That is why Paul himself

emphasizes the great need of fellowship, of the church, of the body. Some individuals, who do not submit to a body, carry on implementing their own visions and dreams. You know the disastrous consequences such as going into all sorts of directions and tangents. But for us to have a body to work with so that the subjectivity is curbed and checked, that is good. Then subjectivity is also curbed or submitted in this way.

v. **The Master's Will**

It is not what I feel, but what I have to do to fulfill my master's will. His will takes precedence over my own feelings, over my own emotions. Suppose I have to choose people or I have to assign responsibilities as a leader, my subjective feelings say one thing but facts which I analyze objectively with others may say other things. So how do I submit to that? The classic story is told about Abraham Lincoln. He had a critic and this man was in his own army at Stanton and he used to call Abraham Lincoln a clown. He called him a gorilla at one time criticizing his personal appearance and when Lincoln had to make a very important decision i.e. appoint a war minister. To the surprise of everyone because they knew what Stanton had been talking about Lincoln, he named Stanton as his war minister. That really bowled everyone over including Stanton. So when Lincoln died, Stanton stood near his coffin with tears in his eyes and said, 'Here lies the greatest man I have ever seen.'

I may be hurt and subjectively I may be hurt. This man may have written about me, talked about me but when I know he is a suitable person with gifts and trainings for a job it's not my subjective feelings or my hurts that should determine my decision. Is he a suitable person? What do the others who are not subjective themselves, what do they say about him? He is a suitable person, give him a chance. That is possible only when we are able to subject our own feelings and our own emotions and be available in spite of what our feelings and emotions are. I want you to think about it in your own ministry. I do not know you; each one is answerable to God.

How much of your activities are guided by your own subjectivity? How you feel what you feel, how you feel towards others, what you feel towards others. How does it affect your own relationships? Pick and choose. You're close to some; you're not close to some. You have cliques. Now let's watch that. It can happen in IEM. We have our own cliques with whom we move. With others we're not free. We just leave them aside. All of these make us unfit for Christian service and for Christian leadership.

But to say it's not my subjectivity. It is what is important for the Lord, what is important for his work, what his will is. That is more important. That is what is very necessary. Otherwise we can go into another danger also as leaders. That was what was said about Indira Gandhi during the emergency time that she wasn't able to see objectively actual needs because she chose to whom she could go for consultation. She surrounded herself only with such people. Sometimes there are people who try to get at you that way also around you, so that no one else can get close to you. How we need to guard ourselves always against this. Make ourselves available and if your heart is sincere the Lord will see to it that you don't get caught into any of these snares and traps. That you're free, you're available and you make your decisions on the basis of what God wants you to do. That is availability.

2. Authority of Servant Leader

Secondly I said, Authority. Now this may come as a surprise. You're talking about a servant and then how can you talk about authority because a servant does not have authority. The authority of a Christian leader is that of a servant leader. Let us look at Luke 7:8. The principle of authority is given here by the centurion. Luke 7:8. I myself am a man under authority with soldiers under me. I tell this one 'go' and he goes, and that one 'come' and he comes. I say to my servant 'do this' and he does it. Did you understand why this man says this at this point? He was expressing the secret of authority, saying to Jesus, 'Lord you have authority because of this principle.' What was this principle? I am under authority so I have authority. If I can

command people it is because I am under authority. So he says, 'You are under the authority of the Father so you have authority.' This is what he implied there. Now that is the principle of spiritual authority. Because we are under authority, because we are slaves, as Paul said in 1 Cor. He said 'I make myself a slave to people.' So because we are slaves to God, because we're slaves to people in leadership, then we also have authority.

i. Voluntary submission

The authority that comes out of such helplessness, such a place of submission is something which is more powerful than authority that is invested in us by appointment or election. Our authority can be invested because of appointment or because of election but then there is an authority that comes because of our own voluntary submission. That is the authority of the servant. I am submitted to the Lord so I speak with authority. I know that I give myself to these people; I am a servant to them so I speak in authority. So in our own churches in our congregations, what is our authority? It is not because the bishop has appointed us or someone else has appointed us. The authority comes to us because we serve the people. Have you noticed it that the pastor who makes himself available to all people is the one who eventually has authority? I've seen it demonstrated very visibly in the past few years.

There was a young man appointed as a pastor who was very well known and there was a flourishing congregation. When he was appointed he was only CTh. So the congregation said, 'He is from the village, how will he manage?' And one man was rude enough, ignorant enough to tell him, 'We have had in this congregation all great speakers, pastors, educated people, and you're coming from the village. We don't know how you will make out here.' Just imagine. When a young man is appointed to go and tell him that.

Yet with all that, those of us who watched him talk for a

year, he won the respect of the people and he went on to command tremendous authority with the same CTh and the same problems with English. So the months went by and the same village background. Yet here was he and when he was about to be moved, people didn't want him to be moved. They went on a delegation, almost persuading the bishop not to move him. How did that happen? It was because this man began to serve the people. He visited all the homes, he ministered to their needs, poured himself out and in a few months he had the authority. So how do we get the authority? It is from going down below and from serving and giving ourselves to people.

But then authority must be exercised. The leader who fails to exercise leadership is a failure. Sometimes there are pastors who refuse to make a decision. They're so flabby, jellyfish-like. The congregation suffers. You say well I'm training the congregation to make a decision. There is a place for that but unless you give them decisive leadership they cannot be trained. A democracy which is so flabby that no one is willing to take responsibility is no democracy at all. They have got the wrong idea of the democracy. A man who is put in leadership must exercise leadership, be decisive, must make decisions and know clearly where he is going, tell others clearly where we are going. No point in saying we're all together in it. Let everybody decide, let everybody make up his mind. Then we'll be going nowhere, a hundred different directions. So there must be an exercise of leadership, exercise of authority. Remember don't opt out of it. Don't say I'm young and I'm just beginning. I can't exercise authority. No, God has put you there and you have to lead your people. What is false teaching, what is error? And in teaching the truth you must exercise authority and in matters of practice and conduct you must exercise authority, particularly those of you who are in mission fields, with people for whom you're responsible. Don't fail to exercise leadership; don't fail to exercise authority, God-given authority.

3 Accountability of Servant Leader

Lastly comes accountability. Paul says in 2 Cor.5:10, 'We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that each one may receive what is due to him for the things done while in the body whether good or bad. Notice here he says, we all have to give an account before the judgment seat of Christ. Paul never exempts himself. He never says, 'I've graduated, come to such a place that I don't have to give an account to anybody. He says 'all of us, including myself I'm accountable.'

i. Limitations in Leadership

Now accountability does bring to us certain limitations i.e. we are servants in leadership, we are accountable, so we have our limits set for us by God. I just want to point out one example for this-a leader who exceeded his limit. 1 Samuel 13:11, 'Saul waited for Samuel at Gilgal. He waited for seven days. When Samuel did not come Saul began to offer the offerings, began to sacrifice, so you know the story. Just when he had offered the offerings Samuel came and in verse 11 he said, 'What have you done?' Saul replied 'when I saw that the men were scattering and you did not come at the set time (he was blaming Samuel)

When you did not come at the set time and the Philistines were assembling at Michmash, I thought (can I think my own thoughts, can I plan my own plans? no. I am under authority. I need to tremble before the Lord and ask what He wants me to do and not exceed the limit.) Instead he said, 'I thought now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal and I have not sought the Lord's favour. So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering.' Who compelled him? It was circumstances or people perhaps. So he said, 'I was compelled by circumstances, I was compelled by people.' But he forgot he was under orders from God. Verse 18-Samuel did not accept that explanation. He said, 'you acted foolishly. You have not kept the command the Lord gave you.' The result was, his kingdom was taken away from him, Samuel says.

So friends, God gives to us, our work, our responsibility, our

assignment and we work for Him within those prescribed limits and may we have the fear of God and that awe and reverence for God to function within those limits and not do what we should not do. Not exceed our limits just because our own feelings dictate, our thoughts dictate, circumstances dictate or others dictate. Sometimes you know even family and friends can influence. They will say, 'What are you doing here man, you were given this responsibility. Go ahead.' No, it's not the family, it's not the friends who should influence you in your position in your responsibility but it is the Lord. You don't exceed the limits set by Him because we are accountable. So may God help us as we seek to exercise our God-given responsibility in our sphere that we be faithful to Him.

38. Steward Leader

The Stewardship of Resources

When we talk about stewardship of a Christian leader, there is a stewardship of resources. We are all responsible for the things that are given in our hands and that is why the administrative secretary emphasizes the need for maintaining a proper inventory, a register of all the things recorded. Now to what extent we carefully maintain that, to that extent our stewardship will be manifested and the things that are given in our hands are given as a trust. So remember there is a stewardship of resources, of things that are given in our hands.

The Stewardship of Resources

Stewardship of People

Then of course there is a stewardship of the people given in our hands and that is why you find both of those thoughts emphasized here in this parable Matthew 24:49. You see here the failure of this steward. He begins to beat his fellow servants, in other words he abused, mistreated his fellow servants and then he began to eat and drink with the drunkards. He misused the Master's possessions and he abused the Master's people. There is a stewardship of possessions, resources; there is a stewardship of people. We are responsible for those who are entrusted to us.

Now look at another parable concerning stewardship in the Gospel of Luke 16:1. I do not want to go into the details of this parable, I just want to say one thing, our Lord is not commending here the crookedness of this man but only the smartness of the man in a parable that is often one main lesson and we cannot go into the details. If you go into the details there were some wrong things he did. Jesus was not commending that. He was only commending his smartness, his cleverness and we read here in verse 1 of Luke 16-Jesus told his disciples, 'there was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions.' Now this man had a role and the role

was that of a manager. Now sometimes in our stewardship, we can misuse our resources and the people entrusted to us and also misuse our responsibilities, our designation, and our title.

2. Titles not Important

Sometimes we get so taken up with the title-director or president or coordinator or secretary or whatever and forget that it's a stewardship given to us.

Now this man was a manager and you know to some people the word manager is almost like a crown. A manager must be saluted, a manager must be respected, and a manager must get his dues. Now that is not so in Christian leadership. In Christian leadership we don't get preoccupied with titles and designations. Those are only to facilitate the functioning. They are not intended as some status symbols. Let us be very clear of that. So sometimes we may rotate the leadership. The man who is General Secretary for five years need not be General Secretary for another five years. Somebody else can be the General Secretary. I think we should be prepared for that kind of a structure in IEM. It's not General Secretary for life. We don't believe in that.

A principal of a seminary need not be a principal for a lifetime. Sometimes it's hard to get some people off the hook. When they're principal they think they are it-till lifetime and then they manipulate, create all sorts of problems for others so they don't become principals. This is wrong. I believe the proper thing will be for leadership by rotation. I'm hoping that probably the next General Secretary besides the Founder General Secretary will probably be for a period. When he moves, somebody else will be General Secretary and he should be willing to serve under the other General Secretary even though he may not be a General Secretary.

I was talking to the principal of the Marthoma Theological Seminary in Kottayam. He was telling me he was stepping down from being principal and everybody else was so concerned

about what he was going to do. Is he going to take a Sabbatical and go off somewhere like some other people do? Or is he going to stay there and work under the leadership of this other man and he said he decided to stay on and work in the same seminary with the other man being principal. Sometimes that can create problems. If the leader is a powerful man he can keep interfering but then if he recognizes that difficulty and still is willing to serve in an ordinary capacity when someone else is principal, that's a great thing. That's how it should be. So he said his son found it more difficult than he did, because you see he was the principal's son. Now he'd be just an ordinary teacher's son. Yes sometimes the family gets drawn into all of that and that makes it even more difficult. The wife cannot be anything except the principal's wife. If a son cannot be anything except a principal's son you have real problem.

But these are all carnal attitudes which have ruined our churches, institutions and organizations. Let us beware of this. It's just something to facilitate the function - all of these titles, designations. We should be willing to be one thing one time and another thing another time. Take Field coordinators, before the man is removed or changed after being a field coordinator after 5 years - is it a tragedy? Does it mean immediately that he is underwritten or underrated? No, let's get it into our thinking that these are all things to help us in our ministry and we don't hold on to this and we are stewards of even the designations that are given to us. However this poor man probably forgot that, and what did he do? Luke 16:1 says, 'There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions.'

Avoid Wasting Resources

Now you see, there you have the first indication of failure. The rich man wasted the possessions as well as misused or abused the people. This man wasted possessions. You heard me explain this parable in messages. I want to repeat it here for our purpose this morning. What does waste mean? Suppose I take a cup of coffee and throw it out, you will call it waste. Suppose I take that same cup of coffee and use it to wash my shoes, it will still be a waste. I'm using it

but not for the purpose for which it was intended. Coffee is to drink, not to wash my shoes. I need not wash, I should polish. Now if I use it for a wrong purpose it is also a waste. So as a steward, as a Christian leader, not only do you completely make your resources useless but you use something which was given for one purpose for another purpose, that's a waste.

Do we recognize that? Sometimes we are not very sensitive to this. Particularly I think our financiers here, finance secretary and others would testify to this. In Christian organizations we are very slack and careless, thoughtless in the use of resources. Funds are earmarked and given for one thing, and we don't think anything about using it for anything else. After all, this money is here. But the money was given to you for one purpose. You can't take it and do something else with that. Remember that is a part of our stewardship. Because the money that was given for one purpose is used for another purpose, the Bible calls it a waste. Waste is using something for a purpose for which it is not intended. So we can use or waste resources. The right thing to do is, donors have given it for this purpose. We are responsible not only to God but also to people. Our donors, our contributors and IEM are trying to maintain integrity at this point.

For instance I could tell many donors, particularly those who give for endowment funds that we never use it for any other purpose other than the earmarked ones, and they are so satisfied about that. We should try to maintain it even on the field level and state level in church ministries department. You may have an emergency and you have funds given for some other purpose. Don't just carelessly, thoughtlessly use it immediately. I'm not saying we shouldn't use it in an emergency, but get clearance, think twice and think carefully before you do that, otherwise, a careless pattern will be set whereby we just handle this from there and there from here, and that will be a waste of resources in some ways.

1. Be Accountable

Because others may know what the priority is, you may not know, right there on the field we get so subjective. All of us are prone to a little bit of subjectivity. Because you know our problems, our needs, our small world is everything to us. So on the basis of that

we decide what is important, what is not important. That is why the importance to be accountable to an outside body, a committee or some leaders. Its not that they are police people or they are just trying to exercise authority but it's wholesome in function, because what you cannot see because of your subjectivity, they can see and they will say, 'Look, that is not the most important thing, this is the most important thing. So use the money for this purpose.' That way waste is avoided, using it for the wrong purpose or for a secondary purpose is avoided. So we are stewards of resources to use it for the purpose for which God intends it.

Avoid Wasting People

Of course we can waste people also. Suppose there is a man who has gifts along one line, he may want to do several things. But subjectively we see and tell him, 'this is what you are gifted in, this is what you have to do because we have tried you in this. You have been very effective. Why don't you do this?' Now that is a wise use of even personnel, of people. This is done by consultation and it is not done so that lives are wasted, gifts are wasted. I still remember in our early days when quite a lot of decision making responsibility was on my shoulders. Theo Srinivasagam was just going over as Personnel Secretary, hadn't really got in there yet. I remember a young doctor whom we appointed and put in a pioneering field. We thought he would make a good pioneer, going from his testimony and from his words. Now we can't always go by words, by zeal, is it? Because we have a great zeal but sometimes we don't produce according to that zeal. So we go wrongly. We forgot that he was young he had never been in a pioneering situation. He was put in a pioneering situation. Our information was that, that place was full of leprosy patients.

That too was not quite accurate. Anyway here he was, and all his frustrations were bottled up. Then when I visited that field he said, 'you have wasted my life.' That really hurt me because that's the last thing I want to do to anyone. Even if I am guilty of wasting my life, I don't want to be guilty of wasting someone else's life. It went deeply, stabbed me. Of course I apologized and explained to

him that he was equally responsible also because he was supposed to have furnished us with information that, 'I am young. I am not for pioneering work, so move me from here.' So there should be feeding of information from that side also. But yet I did accept responsibility for what I have done and that was a lesson to me that we should not waste lives, putting square pegs in round holes will be wasting a life.

Yet because we are fallible, we're human, we're not always hundred percent accurate. Sometimes we go by the trial and error method. We put a person; we take a square peg and put it in a round hole. We find it gets stuck or doesn't move, doesn't produce. Then we say, 'OK come out, we'll find a square hole for you.' We do that sometimes by trial and error. Then we can waste a life that is one thing we have to guard against as leaders.

III. Principles for Steward Leader

Having said that, there are 3 things which I would point out are to be kept in mind as leaders as stewards. The first is safeguard, the second is developing. The third is, be accountable, be responsible.

1. Safeguarding

The first is safeguard, all that is given to me as a steward, I must safeguard. I must not allow resources to be eaten away and I must not allow individuals to deteriorate. I must safeguard and how important that is, that places a tremendous responsibility on us as leaders isn't it? Remember we are talking about leadership at every level-General Secretaries, Central secretaries, State secretaries, associate secretaries, field coordinators and field secretaries. Then take the missionaries with the converts, with the believers. Then as I said yesterday, we exercise influence over others in one way or another, bigger circle or smaller circle. Wherever it is, we have a role, a leadership role. In that influence, in that little circle that we have, we must safeguard those who are given in our hands. Before that I must point out, there was one man who did that safeguarding and he failed. So we have to watch that also.

You remember in Matthew 25, our Lord gave the parable of the talents. Look at the man with the one talent, what did he do? Verse 18, the man who had received the one talent, went off dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. Then verse 25 he said, 'I was afraid and went off and hid your talent in the ground and see here is what belongs to you.' His master replied, 'you wicked, lazy servant.' Now that kind of safeguarding is not what we are talking about. You see preserving with fear and that can in some ways be a waste also. Here are resources given to be used, to be spent. And I'm so careful, to make decisions, to launch out, that I preserve it. That can be a waste. That is also poor stewardship. There is a certain amount of risk. We have to make a decision and move out in the use of resources, in the use of people. We don't preserve them; pickle them to the point of wasting them. That we have to guard against, but when I say safeguard, what I mean is, avoiding wastage and avoiding deterioration and avoiding things being eaten up by wrong things. That is what I mean by safeguard.

Overcoming Insecurity

In the safeguarding, particularly in dealing with people and the leader, there are certain things which we should remember. One is to provide an atmosphere of security. Now I've been thinking about this. Even here in IEM, we are learning through mistakes, we're learning through failures. Security - Do the people who are in our congregation, or in our office, or in our organization, or working with us, feel secure? Or are they always having an insecure feeling? What is the insecurity due to? Insecurity can be because the leader is indecisive. Today he may do one thing. Tomorrow he may do another thing, the third day he might wind up the organization. People may wonder, 'what's going to happen to my future?' Suddenly he says 'there's no money,' and retrenches everybody. Then what'll happen to the future? You see that kind of insecurity can be created in an organization.

On the other hand the same problem of not having money, how can it be faced? The easy thing is that you never share it with

anybody. You never share how much comes in, how much is spent and how it is spent. The statement of accounts is not seen by people outside. Then all of a sudden you say, 'money is not coming so we're going to close,' and everybody gets a feeling of insecurity and that is wrong. On the other hand the financial dealings are shared and the financial situation is shared constantly, people are kept informed of what is happening. Then when it comes to the crux to say, 'Whatever comes, we're going to share it. We're not going to send some of you off and the rest of us enjoy what we have, but whatever comes we're going to share it. Because you have given your life and come in here and we're not going to throw you out.'

Now that type of stewardship is necessary because when people come in, give their lives and come in, there's no point in saying, 'now you're retrenched because of that.' Taking action on disciplinary issues is a different matter. I'm not talking about that. But being open, to provide security. How can we provide that security? As I said, one is to avoid indecisiveness so that we know where we are going. That is why it is good to have a collective planning and collective leadership. It does not all depend on one individual's whims and fancies. So we know where we are going and we know what is being planned and what is to be executed. So that indecisiveness can create damage.

ii. Sharing Financial Information

Secondly we consider withholding information or lack of information. How open are we at all levels of leadership? What do you share with your converts? One of the problems which we face which many of you have shared is that all think we receive a lot of money but we're not giving it to them. Why do they get that idea? Have you shared with them how IEM gets money? Or how you are supported or the struggles you go through? And the finances you have or you don't have. Do the converts know that, you may say, should they know that? Yes, yes. Otherwise all the time they'll be thinking that you are having so much and they don't have so much.

One of our mission leaders, western mission leaders was talking to me. He said very bluntly and I was equally blunt with him also. He said bluntly, 'Why is it that the nationals cannot be trusted with money? They're always out to cheat and deceive.' I told him, 'I'll tell you why. Because you missionaries cover up how much you receive, how much you spend, how much you take for yourselves. No one sees your books. No one knows how much you get. So it's all a hush-hush affair, so the missionary has his money, the national has his money and at the first opportunity the national wants to get the missionary's money. If you're open and if they know what you get and what you don't get, if you just share everything freely, they will say this is our money and they will say this is our vehicle. You lock up your vehicles, you lock up your money and you keep others out. Then don't blame them for trying to cheat you and get the better of you.'

This applies to us also. So let's remember that. The more open we are, the more information you share and that is why even at this level we keep telling you and we wish we could tell you more, 'Don't hesitate to ask also.' You know one thing that will hurt us, those of us who are in leadership, central leaders and others will be for you to go and talk something in a hushed tone saying, and 'I wonder how much came. I wonder how they spent.' Come and ask, how much came and how much is spent. Come and ask us whether we get money from overseas or not and what we do. All of this, nothing is hidden. You can clarify and this kind of thing, information builds on that security so that we don't feel insecure and we want to keep it that way openness, sharing of information. Of course we may not share all the information, particularly at the decision-making level and the process of decision-making. That is not necessary, but what is necessary to create confidence and security must be shared. That has to be done. So that is another way of safeguarding.

iii. Reputations

Then safeguarding also means that others' reputations are safe

in our hands and we have learnt through the hard way sometimes because we've been unwise in saying the wrong thing to the person at the wrong time. Then it comes back to us and then you kick yourself saying, 'why on earth did I say that? I'm sorry that I have betrayed this person by talking what I should not talk about this person.' I have learnt. But the thing to do is to safeguard others' reputation. Suppose someone leaves our organization, is his reputation still safe in our hands? He might have left in an unpleasant situation, that doesn't mean we have to go out and assassinate his character. Sometimes it hurts us because he assassinates our character. He talks about our organization and he talks about our leaders and he talks about the decisions made. But still that doesn't give us freedom to assassinate his character because we are stewards of people, their reputation. So we don't scandalize each other. We don't talk about others and bring them down. That is included in safeguarding possessions and safeguarding people.

2. Developing People

It is not enough to safeguard. There must be developing and this is seen in the life of our Lord Jesus. It is also seen in the life of Paul and I need not point out how important it is that people were not the same when they came to Jesus and stayed with him for 3 and a half years. They were not the same when they came and worked with Paul. Are they the same after they met you or me? Take your own believers, your converts at the field level. The ones with whom you've been moving for a year or two years. Has that made a difference? Have they developed, have you built something into them during those years? Are you an area secretary? Are the people whom you meet at work, with whom we are constantly in touch, have they developed? Praise God, all of us can see that work and development in those with whom we've been in touch. But keep that constantly before you and I keep that constantly before me and evaluate. Have people developed?

We said our theme is 'Build and be built up.' As we are being built up in leadership, we also build others and we must develop others in certain things. First comes discovering their gifts and seeing

that they develop their gifts fully in the place where they are kept. What is our goal in using people or dealing with people? There can be several goals. One goal can be the accomplishing of my work, the fulfilling of my task. I see it from the task perspective. The missionaries are there for church-planting. The church ministries secretaries are there to promote the work, bringing contribution, to bring in prayer supporters. The central leaders are there to see that these people all function properly. So we can look at people purely in terms of the work they do and the work that is turned out.

i. In terms of Organization

Secondly we can see them in terms of the organization. They are here to build up IEM. So how do they build up IEM? We can see it in terms of the organization. A self-centred leader sometimes can think in terms of him being built up. How do they build me up? As a result of all that how do I go out? So these are all various ways of looking at people. But the Christian way, the scriptural way is, 'the people who are with me, are they fulfilling God's will in the best way they can?' Does each one do God's will in the best way he or she can? Remember we are not talking here about performance. It's not what you produce. Sometimes I know a lot of you can develop a low self-image, an inferiority complex because of these things. Avoid that. The most important thing is, you be faithful. We can't evaluate you on that. That is between you and God. You be faithful in doing God's will-what you produce is another matter.

We do evaluate on that basis also because principles of management say we must. But we don't stop with that because we are Christian leaders not just secular leaders, purely evaluating in terms of productivity. We are also evaluating in other terms and the most important point of reference, criterion is – are you fulfilling God's will the best way you can? Remember every word there is important, not merely fulfilling God's will but fulfilling God's will the best way you can. When you do that, I as a leader am satisfied because that is my responsibility as a steward, to see that you are not hindered, you are not hampered, you are not tied up in any way, that you fulfill God's will the best way you can-if we keep that as our goal,

then we can avoid mistakes and we can also avoid being a stumbling block sometimes.

ii. God's will for converts

Take the converts on the field, each one-do they know how to find God's will, do they know how to do God's will? Are they doing it to the best of their ability? That is our goal. We are seeing that they come up to that, we are developing them to do that. That may mean sometimes we help them to do that. For instance here is a man who says, 'I want to be a missionary in an unreached place.' Now we appreciate his zeal but we don't get taken up with his zeal and say immediately, 'OK you be a pioneer missionary,' and he has to break the ground and then he finds he doesn't have the gift for that and gets frustrated. Then he wants to leave the mission-field. You take that same man and you've evaluated his gift and you say, 'Brother you're not for the mission field. You go and do church ministries,' and he blossoms. He seems to be a failure in the field but he blossoms in the church ministries department. Now he shouldn't get guilt feeling immediately saying, 'I'm not in the field, I'm not sacrificing.' We think only in the field we are sacrificing. That's a wrong concept. In the field you have one kind of sacrifice; in the church ministries you have another kind of sacrifice. Sacrifice may vary in its manifestation but in content it's the same because it depends on your dedication, it depends on your consecration. No one should develop a guilt feeling saying 'I'm not in the field now, I'm in church ministries.' Or a man may not be good in church ministries but he may be good in the field.

So to constantly see where they would fit in, what their gifts are, sometimes we have to do it by trial and error because we have no other way of doing it. Sometimes one can observe them and see what their gifts are or find out from their church from their friends what their gifts are. Other times give them a responsibility and see how they do it and then after a time if they are not doing what they should be doing then we can suggest some other possibilities to them according to their gift.

All the time we are thinking of developing people and seeing that their gifts are discovered and developed. Suppose someone comes to you and says, 'Now look, you seem to have gifts for this, so why don't you give this up and do that?' That doesn't mean you're a failure, you shouldn't go down into the dumps and think, he doesn't think much of me, so I'm a failure no. It's only a readjustment and the steward leader is constantly looking out seeing where you can blossom fully. Save all your frustrations, stop you from getting ulcers and all that and where you can blossom with your gifts and your abilities.

iii. Trial and Error

That is a part of this development we are talking about this covering gifts and seeing where people can be fitted in. Now that means, sometimes we may have to be bold in talking to people, confronting people and evaluating people. Suppose I as a steward am constantly hesitating, what will they think about me, what will they say about me, now if I go and tell them this is not what you should be doing, you should be doing something else. If you're all the time trying to safeguard yourself then we can't be good stewards. Because we're out to develop them, it is for their own good that we're doing. We're not writing across people's lives-'failures' but we're shifting them from one place to another so they can blossom in some other place. And when we do that we may be misunderstood, we should be willing to be misunderstood because our ultimate goal is the developing of people and their gifts. Now that is a part of the developing process in stewardship. Also we notice in that development, turn to Proverbs 27:17, Did you notice that, 'as iron sharpens iron so one man sharpens another.' So in this development, in this sharpening, the responsibility again is not all on the leader. He makes it possible for development.

Iron sharpens iron. So in this developing there is the atmosphere and opportunity provided so that we are sharpening each other. We're developing each other so that is another thing that we notice.

iv. Mending People

Now in the Scriptures there is one Greek word that is used with different meanings. The word simply is equipping, say, developing. I want you to look at that in its various meanings. Turn to Mark 1:19, the word is 'mending.' So in developing people sometimes there is a place for mending. The nets have been used, now if they have to be re-used again effectively, some mending is needed.

So the leader as a steward sometimes, spends his time in mending people, in healing their bruises, in working on them so that they become reusable or even if they become more effective if they have in the work become worn out. Then turn to Hebrews 11:3, the word is frame. It's the same Greek word but sometimes it's used in a different meaning. The word used here is 'the world was arranged, put in proper form, arranged.' So sometimes the steward may have to arrange. That is what I said, 'put the person in the right place, so that he can function more efficiently and you may have to rearrange.' That again is a part of it, mending or arranging, putting him in a place where he can function more efficiently.

v. Restoring

Then the third word, Galatians 6:1, the word here is restore, the same word translated as restore. It is actually used to put a dislocated joint in the proper place. Something that is dislocated and you set it right, restore it. Sometimes as a steward, we may have to do that- Not only mending but just setting it right. A dislocated joint is put right in shape. The greatest joy that can come to us is we don't lose anyone whom God gives to us. Unfortunately one of the sad things in my life is when we have to lose somebody from IEM. I don't think that if they have to leave IEM they are out of God's will, it doesn't mean that they go into oblivion, by no means. They can still find God's will and prosper somewhere else. But for us to lose them is saddening. To see that no one is lost or no one leaves then we are able to put them here or there so that they can blossom somewhere or the other and be able to serve the Lord. Jesus

said, 'Lord out of all those you have given me I have lost no one except one.'

Remember what He said. God gave and He kept them, developed them and offered them back to the Lord. That is what a steward is. They are given to me, and then they are with me. I don't break them, bruise them, and batter them. I build them up, develop them and then offer them to you. Even then there may be one lost. That sometimes happens. Of course in that case it was a tragedy. But in our case it need not be a tragedy, they just go and work somewhere else and do God's work. So that is restoring.

vi Equipping Persons

Then the last word is Hebrews 13:20, 21, particularly 21. Look at 21. Equip. May the God of peace equip you with everything good for doing His will. Now that is again the same word—Equipping a person with everything good for doing God's work. That is our goal in being a steward. I equip these who are with me, who are under me with everything that is needed, with everything that is good so that they are doing God's will. That is our role.

Accountability

Be accountable means I have to remember that I'm accountable to God for those who have been entrusted to me. There is a stewardship of people for which I have to give an account. Have you ever thought of that? The people on the mission field whom God has given to you are the people in the church ministries work, the people in our responsibility, we have to report about them to the Lord, give an account about them to the Lord. If we look at it that way, how faithful are we? We must remember we are accountable. If that is so, I must develop myself; I must build myself up so that I can be at my best to be a good steward.

The leader must also be a growing leader. In some organizations, or in a business or in an institution, the institution grows, the organization grows, but the leader doesn't grow. Myopic in his

vision, very narrow-minded and he hasn't studied, he hasn't informed himself, he hasn't been open, he doesn't grow. Then the organization will suffer but as the organization grows, the leader also grows. He's not talking about the things he was talking about 15 years back. But he's bringing new concepts, new vision, and new dynamic. That is what a leader should be if he is to be a good steward. Stones-that is what our theme is, living stones not just dumb stones, plain stones but living stones. They are growing and as they build, they are being built up. That is growth. We grow, we are built up and then we also build. We also let others grow. In all these places of responsibility God has given to us, may he find us to be good stewards.

39. Stewardship

The word 'stewardship' is often understood in relation to money. Unfortunately so much emphasis is placed on this one aspect of Christian stewardship that we forget some of the other equally important aspects. The apostle Paul had a strong sense of stewardship which is seen very clearly in II Corinthians 5.

Stewardship of the Gospel

First of all, there is the stewardship of the Gospel of which Paul was very much aware. It comes through very clearly in all his writings. He is under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish' (Romans 1:14). 'This is how one should regard us as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God' (I Cor. 4:1). 'For necessity is laid upon me, woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel.... I am entrusted with a commission' (I Cor. 9:16, 17). 'God, through Christ... gave us the ministry of reconciliation.... entrusting to us the message of reconciliation' (II Cor. 5:18, 19). The ministry of reconciliation as well as the message of reconciliation is entrusted to us. Through works and words, by lips and life, in verbal proclamation as well as practical demonstration the Gospel must be put on. This is our stewardship.

Being stewards of the Gospel, we are under obligation to take it to others. This is done not with a sense of superiority. We do not go with the Gospel as the haves going to the have-nots or the privileged going to the under-privileged but as those who are under obligation to those who have not had the opportunity. There is no place for pride or boasting in this. Also, this stewardship is not just for the few. It is for every Christian and for the whole Church. Missionary involvement is the same for all believers. Missionary obedience and missionary sacrifice are also the same for all believers. The difference is only in missionary call. Some may be called to send. The division between the missionaries and the senders is artificial. The stewardship is the same for the sender as for the one who goes out but the manner in which it is exercised is according to the will of the Lord.

Dr. Ralph Winter, a well-known missionary statesman defines 'World Christians' as 'persons who accept a personal responsibility for the Great Commission of our Lord'. They are the ones who have become aware of the vast pockets of people who are still unreached with the Gospel. Every believer has an obligation to see that the Gospel is taken to those who have not heard it.

In the exercise of this stewardship, each one of us should place our time, talents, money and possessions at the Lord's disposal and seek His will. It is not merely the gift of preaching or teaching that is used in the exercise of this stewardship. Every gift has its place. The whole life is affected by this stewardship. Our values, goals and pursuits are all brought under the impact of this awareness that those who have never heard the Gospel must hear. We go through life wearing Gospel glasses.

II. Stewardship of People

Secondly, there is the stewardship of people. In II Corinthians 5:16 Paul says, 'From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view....' His perspective of people has changed. What has caused the change? The word 'therefore' links it with the previous verse. In verse 15 we read, 'And he died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised'. In the light of Calvary, his view of people has changed. Because of Calvary we too do not see people as the world sees them in terms of race, colour, caste, class and status. We do not see others as tools to be used for our selfish ends or toys to be used for our selfish enjoyment. Nor do we regard people as a nuisance. We look at them with Calvary glasses as those for whom Christ died.

In the parable mentioned in Matthew 24:45-51, our Lord says that the wicked servant not only 'eats and drinks with the drunken' misusing the master's possession, but also 'begins to beat his fellow servants'. He has failed in his stewardship of people as well as possessions. There is a stewardship of people. We are responsible for those with whom we live and those who live in our generation. These may be in our family, in our office, in our country or in those 'uttermost parts of the earth' where they have never heard the life-

living Gospel. We cannot live for ourselves. We must care, we must pray and we must be concerned..

So often it is easy to be caught up in the whirl of Christian activities, projects and programmes and forget people. When several millions of our countrymen live without the bare minimum of their needs met, do we care? When many among them die without hearing about the Saviour even once, do we care? When someone in the Andamans says, 'We do not know enough about Christ. We want to know more. We need books. Tell us more,' do we care? When an old couple in Orissa dies without food, do we care?

Stewardship of Life

Mostly, there is the stewardship of life. Paul writes, 'We must all appear and be revealed as we are before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive his pay according to what he has done in the body whether good or evil, considering what his purpose and how he may have been, and what he has achieved, been busy with, given himself and his attention to accomplishing' (II Cor. 5:10. English New Testament).

We must look at our todays and tomorrows with Eternity's eyes. Sociologists tell us that ours is the 'Me' generation. We make ourselves and our pleasures the centre of our existence. Ours is hardly a pleasure hunting generation. Even Christians make personal happiness the goal of their lives. Happiness can never be the goal of the Christian life. It is only a by-product. If you pursue after it, you will miss it. If you live for God's purposes you will find it. How often we hear people say, 'I have to live my life.' 'I have my family and myself to take care of. Others must take care of themselves!' Do you know that one day you have to stand before your Master and give an account of your life? What are the things that occupy your time and energy now? Can they stand the scrutiny of God and pass through the test of eternity?

A little boy was walking along a dusty street in his village. He had always dreamt of the day when he would find a precious diamond or some such treasure which would make him instantly rich. He would

have a place instead of this mud hut. Just then he saw something glittering in the dust. He picked it up. It looked like a small shining stone. He thought his moment had come. There was no light in his little hut to examine it. He put it in an empty match box and waited for the morning light. All night he was thinking of his precious stone. In the morning light he took it out of his box and looked.

What a disappointment! It was just an ordinary piece of broken glass painted so as to glitter at night. What seemed to be a costly stone in the dim light of the dusk was found to be a cheap piece of glass in the dawn. When eternity's light dawns upon us, how many things we have gathered up now in the dim light would be seen as cheap and worthless! What seems to be so valuable now may be utterly worthless then and what seems to be valueless now may be seen in its true worth then.

All our successes and accomplishments in life are valueless unless they are linked in some way with God's redemptive purposes.

Only one life, 'twill soon be past.

Only what's done for Christ will last.

40. The Shepherd Leader

Our concentration is going to be on leadership. There was a time I still remember very vividly in South India Bible Institute, as I began my career as a student, I wanted to run away from preaching because I had a severe inferiority complex. I felt I could not speak and I was of no use. And I did not want to be involved in Christian service in any way. Now there are many reasons for that.

I. Makings of a Leader

One was my home. I praise God for my home, for my parents- For their strictness, for their religious and moral upbringing and so I am not saying this critically. But still because my father was an authoritarian figure, as many fathers are in our Indian families today, I did not have many opportunities to make my own decisions or be independent. It will be surprising for you to know, that the first time I made a journey of my own independently was in 1955 just when I had completed my M.A. in university. I never knew that I would be doing so much travelling as now. I would not have believed if anyone had told me so at that time.

Here I was who had never made a journey without my mother or my father up to 1955, which is until I was 20 years old. So because I was brought up in such an atmosphere I had no desire to make decisions or be independent. If anyone had told me that I would be a leader I would not have believed it. I did not want to do anything on my own. I would just do what others asked me to do. How is it then that all these responsibilities have been thrust upon me? I did not plan for it or ask for it. All that I wanted to do was to serve Jesus Christ.

II. Service as responsibility

I think that in serving we get into responsibilities. I think that is the way in which God wants us to be. Anyone who says that I must be a leader or God has called me to be a leader does not know what he is talking about because the pattern in the Scriptures is; in serving we assume leadership responsibilities. It is not as though I will become a leader to serve but I will serve, and in serving I am willing to take up

the leadership responsibilities. That is the way it has come upon me. It was not planned, never expected, never even thought about. But step by step as I kept serving Him I came into some of these responsibilities.

So I want you to know the background. I am not speaking as a specialist but there are lessons that I am learning, still learning, still a lot of lessons to learn. So I don't want you to feel that I am just handing you the things that I have learnt or I have read or I have observed. These are things which mean much to me and they are very precious to me and I cannot preach at you because you are my colleagues. You are my co-workers. I can only share them and it is in this spirit I am going to share thoughts on leadership responsibilities as we see in Scripture. First we will see David the Shepherd Leader.

Now we will see David the Shepherd leader. Turn to Psalm 78 and see verses 70-72. 'He chose David His servant and took him from the sheep pens.

III. Background for Shepherd Leader

'From tending the sheep He brought him to be the shepherd of His people Jacob, of Israel His inheritance.

And David shepherded them with integrity of heart, with skilful hands he led them.'

Notice here, God chose David his servant, from tending the sheep, to be the shepherd of His people. So that was the background. He was a shepherd of sheep and he was called to be the shepherd of God's people. So he was the Shepherd leader. The concept of the shepherd leader is unique in Christianity. You don't find it in any other religion. And you don't find it in any other organization. Christian leadership is in many ways different from secular leadership. We can learn a lot from secular leadership.

1. Concept of Shepherd-King Unique

When I was travelling by plane I saw the Indian Airlines magazine called 'Swagath.' And it was always there. I think in every quarter they change it. In this particular issue, there were some very

useful ideas on leadership. I read it. It was useful to me. But then I thought how different it was from Christian leadership. Secular leadership training and lessons have much to teach us. Yet Christian leadership is unique. For instance, the thought of shepherd leadership is completely unique to Christianity and the king as the Shepherd King is known only to Israel. You don't find it in the contemporary kingdoms at all. Babylon, Assyria, Egypt, Phoenicia and all the other kingdoms never had the idea of a shepherd king.

The idea of God as a shepherd is also unique to Israel. You won't find it in the Koran or in any Hindu scriptures or anywhere-the concept of God being a shepherd. It is true that Vishnu in one of his incarnations as Krishna was a cattle herder but then the emphasis is not on his shepherd heart but is on something else. And so we find the idea of God as a shepherd also unique to the Christian faith. David was called to be a shepherd leader. The challenge of Christian leadership is right here. So that is what I want to mention first-the challenge of Christian leadership.

Challenge of Christian Leadership

What is the challenge of Christian leadership? Now you may say, "We'll don't call me a leader. I don't want to be a leader." But that is not the point. It is not as though we choose leadership or we get out of leadership. That is part of our service. In the path of our service this is one thing that we do. God calls us to it. It is not as though we choose it for ourselves or we don't choose it for ourselves. God brings you into that. You might have come from a background which is not at all suitable for leadership- where your individuality was crushed and you had to battle through that and then battle with an inferiority complex. But if God has called you, if He institutes you He will give you adequate provision for them. Now when you come into that provision, remember you have to be the shepherd.

3. The Bible gives 3 distinct figures for leadership.

1. One is that of a **steward**. The leader is a steward. In Matthew 24, in the last few verses, in the parable, Jesus talked about a

steward. He had all the master's possessions to look after. He had all the master's people to look after. This man was a steward. So there is the figure of a steward.

ii. **Then there is the figure of a servant.** The concept of servant leadership is completely unique to the Christian faith.

iii. **Then there is the figure of a shepherd.** That is the challenge of Christian leadership-to be a shepherd- The shepherd that God wants me to be.

IV. Under-shepherds

Now another aspect of this challenge is we are under the leadership of God or in another word we are under-shepherds. Peter recognized this. We notice this in the commissioning our Lord gave to Peter in John 21:15-17. He again and again says, "My sheep." In verse 15 he said, 'Feed my lambs.' In verse 16 He said, "Take care of my sheep." Again in verse 17 he said "Feed my sheep." So we are not the only leader over the people whom God has given to us. He is the real leader. We are under Him. He is the chief shepherd. We are under-shepherds. So the flocks are His and the sheep are His. So there is a strong sense of accountability in this.

1. **Accountable to God.** Brothers and sisters, this is the number one thing that must be instituted in our hearts. Sometimes the Lord checks me. He said, 'You are accountable to me in all that you do, all that you say, all that you write and for all the decisions you make.'

If I am accountable to God can I treat this person in this way? I am accountable to God. They are His sheep. They are His lambs. I am accountable to Him. So the whole concept of David's leadership is seen in his life. God above him and David was only God's representative. You know that was the ideal that God had for Israel. Israel was always to be a Theocracy and when they chose the king, God was grieved. God told Samuel, "They have not rejected you, they have rejected me." Then again God accepted David. David functioned beautifully in that setup. That is why

David is mentioned many times as 'David my servant.' God said, "He did all that I had purposed and planned." This is because David, in spite of all his failures was under God's government. He was an ideal ruler in Theocracy.

However Solomon and all the others failed in that. That was why the kingdom of Israel was destroyed. Now what did he do? He often consulted God. He depended completely on God. In 1 Samuel 23 we notice how dependent David was on the Lord. Turn to 1 Samuel 23:1. "When David was told, 'Look the Philistines are fighting against Keilah and are looting the threshing floors.'" He inquired of the Lord saying, 'Shall I go and attack these Philistines?'

The Philistines had come to fight against Keilah. What should he do? The thing to do was take action immediately, go against the Philistines. But instead David goes and asks the Lord.

Decisiveness:

Now there is a balance here because decision making is one of the main qualities of the leader. Indecisiveness is something we must avoid. We must take a decision promptly without wasting time, without wavering. Also we must act promptly and that is very necessary. This is because if we don't make decisions promptly sometimes we lose and the opportunities are gone and the problems deepen. At the same time, on the other side, a prompt action without consulting the Lord can also lead to disastrous consequences. So there is a balance here. We don't dilly dally, we don't postpone but at the same time we make sure of the Lord's mind on these matters. Now sometimes I have been guilty of postponing. At other times, I have been guilty of rash actions.

We learn from all these. This is the tension, creative tension. I call it creative because we cannot escape it- Creative tension in leadership. On the one side, he shouldn't make quick decisions; on the other hand he should make decisions promptly. How do we go about doing this? Without consulting God can we take decisions?

A man was invited to be a Sunday school speaker by a well-known preacher, Samuel Morgan. And this man wrote and said, 'Give me two months; I have to pray about it and know God's mind. The Sunday school function was to be in two weeks. So Samuel Morgan wrote back to him and said, 'If you are that far from God, please don't come.' Now that is an extreme. Two months to pray for a function that is going to take place in 2 weeks.

So don't excuse your own indecisiveness, your laziness and your sloppiness by putting the blame on God and saying, 'I have to pray and make up my mind.' On the other hand we should not rush into things and make our decisions because we are under Him. Our leadership is a delegated leadership. He has delegated it to us. He is the chief shepherd, so I must know His mind. I cannot act on my own decisions. At the same time I must act quickly and promptly. How do I do that? There is only one secret. Paul gives it to us. In Colossians 1:9 he said, ".....praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of His will...."

If we constantly maintain a close walk with the Lord, then we will know what God's mind is. How?

There are principles given here and those principles fill our minds. Those teachings, those truths fill our minds and we keep close to Him. Then when a decision has to be made, you can make it according to His mind. You don't have to spend two months waiting on Him to know His will. So that is the secret. I keep myself in Him. I constantly learn from Him by submitting to Him, accepting His yoke. So I don't have to take a long time to make a decision. Now that is a challenge of leadership.

V. Conflicts of leadership.

What are some of the conflicts in leadership? The first conflict in leadership is,

1. You have to **deal with people**. It is easy to be a shepherd of sheep but it is hard to be a shepherd of people. It is easy to lead sheep and cattle but it is hard to lead human beings. It is easy to

deal with machines, but it is hard to deal with men. It is easy to deal with paper but it is hard to deal with persons. You and I recognize that. In any work, in any sphere of influence, we know how difficult it is to deal with people of various natures, various kinds and various feelings. You move this way, you may make a mistake. You move that way you may make a mistake. How on earth are you to deal? Now one danger is to say, "I am fed up with all these, I will just run away and have an easy time." You cannot. Why? For two reasons:

One: You may miss God's will because leadership is not luxury. Leadership is an obligation which God has given to you. If you have sought some elections by paying huge sums of money as is done often in some circles, then it is a different matter. But if it is a matter of something that is given to you after prayer and God has led you into that, then you cannot say this is an option. So by running away we may miss God's will.

Secondly, we may miss also the opportunities for our transformation into Christ-likeness.

For instance, in certain places which God has for me, I can be more Christ-like. If I leave that place I miss the chance of being made more like Christ. Do you understand what I mean? In this position I have to deal with all sorts of problems. But in dealing with them, the Lord polishes me, makes me more like Christ. If I get away from that, I may miss that opportunity of being made like Christ. So that too will be a loss. I had to guard myself against that.

Then some of us will say, when am I going to relax in leadership; settle all problems and everybody is steady and no one goes out of line and I have all the leads in my hand? You know when you are taking 4 dogs out for a walk, and you have all the leads in your hand and all the 4 dogs meekly before you and you seem to be in control of everything. When am I going to be like that?

I want to tell you that will never happen. Because in leadership,

when one challenge is over, there are other challenges and constantly you have challenges. Blessed is the man who knows how to thrive and not only survive but also thrive in the challenges and in the conflict. It is easy to say that here but to go through it is hard. In one of the articles about Mrs. Gandhi it was said that she just revelled in facing challenges. We can never come to a place where we can say, "Alright this problem is over. Now there are no more problems." If one is over, another will come and this is true even in our responsibilities. To be constantly facing them and to not only survive but also thrive in them that is what you are called to.

2. Conflict of Jealousy

Now in relationships what are the other conflicts? First there will be those who are jealous. We see that in 1 Samuel 18:6-9, "When the men were returning home after David had killed the Philistine, the women came out from all the towns of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing, with joyful songs, and with tambourines and lutes.

'As they danced they sang: Saul has slain his thousands and David his tens of thousands. Saul was very angry; this refrain galled him. 'They have credited David with tens of thousands' he thought, 'but me with only thousands. What more can he get but the kingdom? And from that time on Saul kept a jealous eye on David.'

How did this jealousy come? Some foolish women began to compare. They were foolish because they should not have done that. They began to compare and they said, "Saul has killed thousands and David has killed ten of thousands." There will always be those who will come and make unwise remarks about you and compare you with someone else. Immediately if I get jealous at every statement that people make where can I execute my responsibility? Ask yourself, 'Is my security dependent on what people say or do not say? Or is my security dependent on what God is to me personally?' Now we have to resolve this in our own hearts.

Brothers and sisters, God has called you to a great responsibility. My burden today is that we should have a band of men, trained whose heart God has touched to offer aflame with love for men, with love for people. How can we be such a band of men? Only if your heart is clear of jealousy. How can we be clear of jealousy? Let me be very practical. Deep in your heart you should realize, 'My security does not depend on what this man thinks about me or what that man thinks about me or what this one said, or that one said.' If you become touchy and sensitive about people's remarks immediately you are in a state of vulnerability. There are some who know what to say to put you out of action. Satan knows what should be said to put you out of action. He will make people say exactly the same thing because once that is said, here you go off into a corner and God's work suffers. Saul was raked with jealousy and David was attacked by this jealous man. Sometimes we are victims of others who are jealous. Then what do we do?

Do you know what David the shepherd leader did? Because he had another leader, he left it in His hand. If I am the only leader then I have to fight my battles. But if I am only a delegated leader, one who is under somebody, I will let him fight for me. I will tell him, 'It is your work. This man being jealous of me is attacking your work. You take care of him. It is between you both. I am not getting involved in this.' That was the secret of David, learning to commit his problems to the Lord.

In Samuel 25:3 we notice Nabal. This Nabal was of the tribe of Caleb. He was surly and mean in his dealings. He was a very nasty and mean man. Let us see 1 Samuel 25:11. 1 Samuel 25:11, 'Why should I take my bread and water and the meat I have slaughtered for my shearers and give it to men coming from who knows where?'

You see, now he talked about David. He said 'who is this man? I don't know from where he is coming.' Did he not know that? He knew yet he slighted him. He said, "Why should I take my bread and water and give it to this man?" Sometimes you and I may be

snubbed. People do not give the respect due to me. This is a big problem, isn't it in leadership? They don't give me the respect they should give me. May I say this to you? Respect is not gained by authority. It is earned by love. Sometimes we can get unconsciously into casual, secular, worldly ways of thinking. This man doesn't respect or stand up in my presence. He doesn't talk to me as he should. Don't get preoccupied with these things. Is there someone who is deliberately slighting you and snubbing you? You leave it in the hands of the Lord. When your authority is established by His presence with you, by His vindicating you, then God will deal with him. It is not up to me to go to him and say, "You must respect me; you must treat me this way." No my responsibility is to take care of the people who are under me, to take care of the work. Whether others respect me or not, they are answerable to the Lord who has appointed me. David got annoyed; he got angry at him at this slight. But then you know the story. God intervened and prevented him from killing Nabal through Nabal's wife.

3. Subjectivity or Objectivity

Now in leadership, there is what is known as objectivity and subjectivity. One thing which I am learning is to get out of subjectivity into objectivity. What is subjectivity? I am so sensitive, easily hurt. Therefore all the time I am on pins and needles. If I am that way, I cannot make decisions properly. For instance, suppose you are coming to me, and talking to me and in the course of your talk, you say something which I don't like, immediately I become subjective and my feelings are all roused up and I am thinking only of that. I am not listening to what other things you are saying to me or I go for promotional work to a place and the pastor doesn't respect IEM. He says, 'What on earth is this IEM? No one has heard about it. In these days there are many such organizations coming around to take our money and to spoil our churches.' That one thing is enough to send you into a corner. You just wilt and are not prepared for anything else. You have lost your opportunity in that place because of your subjectivity. Because you have been so sensitive, you got hurt and from that time onwards you can never relate to that man and you have lost.

On the other hand if you are objective you can understand why that man speaks like that. After all he doesn't know me, he doesn't know IEM. We are not the only kingpins on this land and he doesn't know it. That is why he has mentioned it. So I explain those things to him. I will relate to him. I will not kick him out or write him off. I will go to him and you have won a man. How many times we have won people over like that? Subjectivity not only ruins our decision making processes, clouds our minds but also ruins our chances. When we are snubbed let us watch that we don't become touchy, restive and loose the opportunity to serve God.

4. Problem of Slander

The next problem is slander. In II Samuel 16 you read how David was slandered by Shimei. Shimei was throwing stones at him. Let us see 1 Samuel 16:7, 8. "As he cursed, Shimei said, "Get out, get you man of blood, you scum. The Lord has repaid you for all the blood you shed in the household of Saul in whose place you have reigned."

He said, 'You are a man of blood.' Is that true? Yes it was true. David had shed blood. David had been a man of war. But David did not shed the blood of Saul's family. He was very careful about how he treated them. Therefore slander is often born out of half truth. That is what it is. It is not complete truth but half truth. Slander is criticism without content. It does not have truth behind it. You and I may have to face it. There may be people who throw stones. You know at whom everyone is tempted to throw stones? Suppose you are standing with 50 people, shoulder to shoulder, will anyone throw stones at you? No, because others will be hurt. Suppose there are 50 people around you and you stand on a stool, everyone will throw stones at you because you become a target.

The higher you climb the more you become the target. That is part of the price of leadership. You cannot say, I will not be a leader because everybody is throwing stones at me. When you are up there, even a man going on the road will feel like throwing a stone at you because you stick out like a sore thumb

there. That is part of leadership. How do we accept slander, when people say things which are not true? David is a good example. He immediately was a broken man. In II Samuel 16:11 it says, "Leave him alone; let him curse, for the Lord has told him to."

In verse 12 he says, "It may be the Lord will see my distress and repay me with good for the cursing I am receiving today." He said, 'God knows my heart. God has allowed this. I will accept it. If there is any truth in this, if God wants me to learn through this, I will take it. But I will leave it in His hand.' Scandal or slander is like wet mud," said Oswald Chambers, "and if you rub it in the fabric to remove it, it will get into the fabric in the cloth. Leave it and let it dry then with a flip of a finger you can throw it off." So when people slander you what should you do? Don't run around here and there defending yourself, excusing yourself, fighting your own battle. Leave it in the hands of the Lord. It will dry off and it will fall off. If there is something to learn from that we will learn from that. That is how David dealt with slander.

5. Problem of Betrayal

Then there was betrayal. Turn to II Samuel 15:31, "Now David had been told, "Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom." So David prayed, "O Lord turn Ahithophel's counsel into foolishness." That is all he did.

Ahithophel was his close counselor. Now he had become an enemy. So one who knew all his secrets has now become his enemy. One who is close to you becomes a betrayer. What should you do? Go and shoot him down? No. Again, leave it in the hands of God. What did David do? Just had a word of prayer. The moment the word reached him, immediately he lifted up his heart to God and said, "Lord you take care of him." That is all. If a man is plotting against you, just tell the Lord, "Lord you take care of him."

Sometimes it may be imaginary also. You may think that the whole world is plotting against you, but something is wrong

with you. That is also possible. That is why, when I take it to the Lord, He will tell me, 'My child, you are imagining vain and foolish things.' If it is not a vain and foolish thing, He will take care of it. So all I have to do is tell Him, "Lord these people are against me. I don't know what all they will do. I know my life is secure in your hands. You take care of them." Isn't it marvelous! you know brothers; one of the things that plague us often is fear. Fear of each other, insecurity. What will this man do to me; will the report go against me? You have just to pray and tell the Lord, 'Lord take care of them because after all my life is in your hands.' That is what David did when he was betrayed.

Lastly, in situations that caused him to be discouraged, what did David do? Let us turn to 1 Samuel 30:6, 'David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him...'

Do you know who these men were? They came to David when he was in the cave. They were debtors, they were in trouble, and they were in all sorts of difficulties. David molded them and turned them into a real band. Instead of being loyal to him now, when they were all in difficulty, they were talking of stoning him. This will happen in leadership.

Volatile People

You will find how volatile people are sometimes. The same man who pledged his life to you, within one week will want to stone you. Didn't they do that to Jesus? They wanted to make Him a king on Sunday, and they wanted to crucify Him on Friday. In leadership we have to face the volatile nature of human beings. And I cannot depend too much on the loyalty of people. Suppose I build my own ministry on the loyalty of human beings alone, I may have some disappointments. I want the loyalty of people but it is not that on which I depend. That may happen to you. The very people, through whom you have built up a team around you, may come against you. These men wanted to stone David because their wives and children were all taken captives and they had lost everything. Now in that situation, what did David do? Let us see the last part of verse 6 in 1 Samuel: 30.

'David found strength in the Lord his God.' Another translation says, 'David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.'

I want to ask you, 'Have you learned the secret of finding encouragement in the Lord your God? In the midst of discouragements, in the midst of discouraging circumstances, this man because he was an under-shepherd to the chief Shepherd knew how to go to the chief Shepherd and find encouragement.

Earlier I pointed out to you, the challenge of leadership which essentially was being an under-shepherd under the Great chief Shepherd. Listening to Him, knowing His will, and doing it. That was the great challenge. Then we considered the conflicts in leadership, relationships and situations. In talking about relationship we considered what David did, when he was hated because of jealousy, when he was mocked, when he was slandered and when he was betrayed. Now we also saw how he encouraged himself in the Lord God in various situations and circumstances. How does a person cope with his circumstances? Does he go down under them or is he able to get above them?

It is not that Christian leaders never get discouraged. There were times when David was discouraged. 1 Samuel 30:6 clearly says, he was distressed because they were the men whom he had built up to be a team, gathering around him, wanting to stone him.

7. Facing Discouragement

God wants us to be very normal. He does not want us to be abnormal or subnormal. A normal response in a situation like that is to be distressed, to be discouraged. 'Here are the people I have built up, whom I have trusted and they have turned against me. So I am distressed.' But though David was distressed, he did not go down under them, that is where the leadership quality stands. You may be discouraged but because you are discouraged do you go and lie down and go to sleep? That is the

reaction of some people. They will become sleepy when they are discouraged. Does that happen to you? You are so dull and you can't do anything, so the only thing you can do is to sleep.

That is a very poor way of facing discouragement or to completely withdraw and be inside. Today I am not going to do anything. I will just be in my room or in my home. That too is a poor way because you are wasting God's time and opportunity. There is no provision in your schedule or mine for weeping over ourselves. No management seminar will make provision for such an item on your agenda-now from ten to twelve o'clock let us have a little cry for ourselves. That is not provided for. That is a waste of time. Do we take it out on others? But the right thing to do is not to go down under it but to encourage ourselves in the Lord. Have that secret resource when you go to Him and you take your hurts, disappointments, discouragements and allow Him to strengthen you. That is what David did.

Facing Failure

In situations, the first thing is discouragement, the second thing is failure. There isn't a leader who has not failed. And I want you to know that sometimes the sense of failure can crush you. Don't allow that. You may say, 'I have failed as a leader. Look at this one who has left and that one who has left or what this person says or that person says.' Now it is true, every time a person leaves, it breaks our heart. We search our hearts; we ask why this person has left. Is it because of some wrong decisions? If we ask the Lord to show us. That we should do. At the same time we should not allow failure to completely defeat us and overwhelm us. Discouragement shouldn't overwhelm us and we should failure.

Accepting Responsibility

What did David do in his failure? First he accepted his responsibility for his failure. That is one of the most difficult things and the Lord is teaching me that. If someone has failed, I as the leader am responsible. I can't shift the blame to the field leader and say he failed, because above the field leader, I am there as the general secretary. So it is my failure.

To accept the responsibility for failure, if the state promotional secretary has done something which has resulted in some difficulty? The leader must accept responsibility. He must say, 'The buck stops here,' as the Americans say. Not pass the buck but say, 'the buck stops here.' Here I am sitting on this chair and I bear the responsibility.

That does not mean I excuse sloppiness or mistakes in my co-workers or those who work under me. I can call them and talk to them that is different. But as far as the public is concerned I am responsible, not to excuse myself and say so and so did this and so and so did that, and to betray my colleagues or embarrass them and put them down. That is not the sign of a leader. To save your skin is not important when you are a Christian leader. To some people that is the most important thing. I must save my face.

To some people their skin is important; to others the face is important. Those are 2 different things. To save your skin means, 'I don't want to be put into pain.' To save your face means, 'I don't want to be put into shame or embarrassment.' Both saving skin and saving face are not a consideration for a Christian leader. But on the other hand, to say with God's grace, 'I accept this as my mistake, my failure,' is the right thing to do. Now David did that. Look at Psalm 51:4. This was of course a moral failure, when he failed morally, he says 'against you, you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight...'

Very clearly he says, "Lord this is sin and I have done it. This is evil in your sight." Then look at the rest of the verse. '.....so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.'

'You are a just God. This is not your mistake. This is my mistake. I have sinned. I have failed.' When you go through failure, not in our work only but in our personal life also, in

our relationships, the sign of a leader is to accept it and to own it and reveal it to the Lord, if necessary to confess it where it needs to be confessed. In our country part of it is because of our culture, a leader should not fail. And even his failures are glorified. This happens in our politics. It happens in our religions. Look at all the babas with some scandal behind them-yet there will be no decrease in their followers.

Even if Sai Baba with all his inward immoralities is exposed, still there will be people who follow. That is our country. Because of that we unconsciously assume this kind of an attitude-'how can my failure be known? I am a superman. I should not fail. My failures should not be known. 'That is dangerous.

ii. **Face your Failures**

Now later, when we study about Paul, we will look into this. Paul never adopted that attitude. Saul adopted that attitude. You know what Saul did. He told Samuel, "Alright, now you tell me I have sinned, I accept it. But please come and honour me before this people. Don't let this go out of you and me. Honour me before this people."

David on the other hand, wrote down his confession and told the whole world, 'I have sinned against Thee and against Thee only have I sinned.' Just because you failed and confessed it, God will see to it that your influence does not go down. He will take care of it. Sometimes we even talk as if we are the guardian angels of our own ministry. 'Oh what will happen to my ministry if I confess?' Better win your soul and not talk about your ministry and hide sin. Better take care of your soul. It is much more dangerous to lose your soul than to talk about your ministry and hide your sin. This is very true, particularly of sexual sins and sins in money matters, and sins we normally don't like to reveal because we think 'my ministry will go.' God will take care of your ministry but watch your soul. Confess your sin. Come out in the light. Accept your failure and God will take care of it.

Our ministry is in his hands. In many, many cases we can say that when a person comes out and confesses and truly repents, God protects even the influence, even the authority. He doesn't let them down. There may be immediate repercussions. But it is taken care of in the long run.

Confession

Then the second thing we often try to cover up is-because I am a leader, how can people accept me if I fail? I am supposed to be a superman. That is not the kind of Christian leadership we talk about here. Christian leadership is much more a transparent leadership and it is not something where we can cover our weaknesses, cover our failures and pose to be what we really are not. Then we can pass off as leaders. David accepted his mistakes and he was willing to confess. The circle of sin must be the circle of confession. If your leadership is to be effective, notice all of these principles, spiritual principles and scriptural principles. Where I have failed and in that circle I must confess my failure and act; also testify that God has forgiven me and cleansed me, and then my influence is restored.

Now in David's case you notice in II Samuel 24:1, his failure in the matter of counting Israel and Judah. Here it says, it was God who stirred up David. But in Chronicles you read that it was Satan who incited David. God's anger burnt against David. Now it was Satan who tempted but God allowed him to be tempted. That is the correct interpretation. So God allowed him to be tempted and he fell and took a census without consulting God. Taking census was not wrong but taking it without consulting God was wrong. So now God said to David, 'I want to punish you. You choose what punishment I should give you.' David said, "I will fall into your hand." So he chose the plague. When the plague was striking down the people, David said, 'I am the one who has done wrong.'

II Samuel 24:19, 'When David saw the angel who was striking down the people, he said to the Lord, "I am the one who has sinned and done wrong. These are but sheep."

Notice the shepherd leader speaking. "I am the one who has done wrong. I am the shepherd. Punish me. I take the blame. What have they done? Let your hand fall upon me and my family." Isn't that marvelous? In the day and age when every leader will try to put the blame on others, and escape to save his skin and to save his face (this is what is happening in politics) Christian leadership will say, 'Because I am a shepherd leader, let me be punished. It is my mistake. Why should they be punished? Let me bear the brunt of this and pay the penalty. I will bear the cost of this failure.' That is shepherd leadership. We accept our failures, accept our responsibility for them and also accept the consequences and not pass them on to others.

In 1 Chronicles 12 we notice the kind of men David was leading. If you would notice how David began his career, he was chosen from among the shepherds to be shepherd leader of the people of Israel. Now when he was going to war against Goliath, he could not wear the armour of Saul. Saul gave him the armour. David could not walk in it. He put it aside, he took the sling and five stones and went to war against Goliath. Such a man is commanding men, who could handle any kind of weapon. We see 1 Chron 12:23 onwards 'these are the names of the men armed for battle who came to David at Hebron from Saul's kingdom over to him, as the Lord had said:

Men of Judah, carrying shield and spear-6800 armed for battle.' Verse 33 'men of Zebulun, experienced soldiers prepared for battle with every type of weapon, to help David with undivided hearts.' Verse 37, "and from east of the Jordan, men of Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh, armed with every type of weapon..."

Leadership and Security

Notice that these were large numbers of men who were under David's command and they could use any weapon. Sometimes you and I may be called to lead people who are more educated than we are. How do you react? You may be called to lead people who speak better than you can, sing better than you can. How do you react? May I tell what the reaction often is among us? We get jealous, he is more educated, and he has got college degrees. I

don't have college degrees. He has a Ph.D. I don't have a Ph. D. I am his leader. So what do I do? I begin talking about all educated people. 'These educated fellows with their MA's and BDs and Ph.Ds are of no use. Of what use are they in tribal areas? Of what use are they in promotional work?' Do you know why you are running them down? It is because you are jealous. You say, "I will see that they are pushed off somewhere where this education is of no use and they are of no use." Or say, "Well what use is singing today? They are just showing off." On the other hand I am jealous of their singing. I cannot sing and they can. I want them to be in the platform. So I talk about singing as of no use in the ministry. Let us be careful -you hurt not only yourself but also the cause of Jesus Christ.

Now why does this come? If you find your security in Jesus Christ this won't happen. If you find your security in your degrees this will happen. If you find your security in your talents this will happen. If you find security in the number of people who come and listen to you, this will happen. If you find your security in your success this will happen. But if you find security in Jesus Christ, you will say, "Lord you know me and I know you. You have chosen me. My place is secure in you. I don't care how many degrees people have or talents they have, you have called me and my place is secure in you." If you have that security in your relationship with Jesus Christ, you will not care how much more gifted or educated people are. Brothers and sisters, God may lift you up to lead others who are more educated than you are. Jealousy will destroy you, not the other person. Your insecurity will destroy you. It will come in a subtle way. No one else will know. God will know and you will know. But beware of it, be honest with yourself and say, "God you have given me this privilege of leadership. I will praise you for that and accept what you have given me. I will not be jealous of this man. After all, he has his place and I have my place."

How important this is for the Church in India. I tell you organizations and churches and denominations are brought to ruin by this kind of jealousy. Younger men complain that older

men don't allow them to come forward. Educated leaders in churches complain that uneducated older pastors don't allow them to come up. Let us not be guilty of that. God has called us for leadership. Find your security in Him. Even if men under you are more educated and gifted than you are, accept it. That is what David did.

We have seen the shepherd leader in his relationships, in his situations. My prayer is that as we look at these examples in scriptures, these principles will be deeply written on our hearts.

X. Missions and Family Life

41. The Christian and Sex

When God made man and woman He made them as sexual beings. Along with the physical, moral and spiritual nature man was also given the sexual nature. Sexuality is not sinful. It is God given. When God made the woman and brought her to the man, His Word gives the verdict, "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed" (Genesis 2: 24,25). Notice the words "they become one flesh." Physical union in marriage was ordained by God. There was nothing to be ashamed about the body of each other. The human body with all its appetites and functions is God's gift to man. There is nothing in the body or its appetites and functions which should make us feel ashamed or guilty.

Now, look at the change that sin brought. After they sinned "the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons" (Genesis 3:7). They became aware of each other's body with a sense of shame. Thus sexuality became sensuality. The unhealthy and sinful tendency to voyeurism and the attraction of nudism leading to pornography and all sorts of sexual perversion are the result of man's sin. These are not to be confused with the God-given attribute of human sexuality. It is wrong to believe that sex came as a result of the fall of man. The fall of man led to the perversion of sex and resulted in sensuality.

I. Sex and the single person.

The Corinthian society, like our society was obsessed with sex and given to all sorts of sexual perversions. That is why Paul's teaching in the Corinthian letters is very relevant to us. These truths are applicable to all men and women whether they are teenagers, young adults, middle aged or old and whether they are married or single.

1. The body is the gift of God. He made it. The quotation from Psalm 40:6 attributed to Christ in Hebrews 10:5 says, "A body

has thou prepared for me". Psalm 139: 15 says, "My frame was not hidden from thee, when I was being made in secret, intricately wrought in the depths of the earth." The body is not sinful, it is sacred. It belongs to God and must be used for Him. "The body is not meant for immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body" (I Corinthians 6:13).

The body is the member of Christ (I Corinthians 6:15) and to give it to immorality is robbery. As our bodies are members of Christ, defiling them is dishonouring Christ.

The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 6:19,). Sexual impurity involves the body and grieves the Holy Spirit.

The body is valuable because it was bought with a price, the price of the precious blood of Christ (I Corinthians 6: 19,20). Our body is not our own for us to use as we please. It must be surrendered to the complete control of the Holy Spirit. He alone can keep our bodily appetites under His control. This is the secret of a sexually clean life. Self-control is not through our self-effort, it is essentially Spirit-control.

The body will exist eternally (I Corinthians 6: 14). It is not temporary though it goes through change at resurrection. If this is so, how carefully we must keep this body!

I Corinthians 6: 18 says, "Shun immorality. Every other sin which a man commits is outside the body; but the immoral man sins against his own body." Sexual sin is self destructive. It mars the body and the personality. It warps the mind, the emotions and the will.

Sex is permitted only within the marriage relationship. Two persons who are sexually involved "become one flesh" and this should be a one man-one woman relationship within the marriage bond (Genesis 2: 24, I Corinthians 6: 16). Pre-marital and extra-marital sex are not permitted in the Bible. The person who guards his/her affections and keeps himself/herself in sexual purity will have the capacity to enjoy sex within the marriage bond. Those who squander away this God-given gift will suffer dissatisfaction and frustration within the marriage bond and will be tempted to go into sexual perversions.

II. Sex and the married person.

It is evident from Genesis 2:24 that God has planned for the

married person to enjoy sex within the marriage bond. This verse is quoted in Matthew 19: 5,6, Mark 10: 7,8 by our Lord and in Ephesians 5:31 by Paul. The sentence "The two shall become one flesh" indicates that sexual enjoyment is meant for both the husband and wife. As commonly believed in our country, it is not right to think that it is only the husband who is entitled to sexual enjoyment and the wife is merely the means for procreation.

The wife is often regarded merely as a child-bearer. But Genesis 1: 18 says, "The Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him'". From this it is evident that companionship more than procreation was the reason why God instituted marriage. So a marriage is not a failure if children are not produced. It is not right to marry a woman merely for producing children. Companionship is God's purpose in marriage. Children are a gift from the Lord (Psalm 127: 3) and God does answer prayer and give children as in the case of Hannah (1 Samuel 1: 9-20) and Elizabeth (Luke 1: 13). But if prayer is not answered in that way and if children are not born, it is not a tragedy. God's gift of companionship in the marriage relationship must be accepted and used for serving Him. What we do for God with our lives is more important than having children!

Sex is not to be indulged in intemperately even within the marriage bond. Priorities must be established and moderation and self-control practiced. There may be times of abstinence for the sake of spiritual considerations (1 Corinthians 7:5). Those who do not honour God in their sex life in marriage end up in frustration and disillusionment. Sex is not to be used as a weapon against the other partner in marital conflicts. Each partner must recognize the rights of the other over his/her body and should not deprive him/her. If sexual abstinence is practiced even for spiritual reasons, it must be by mutual agreement (1 Corinthians 7: 3,4). God's gifts to us are good and they are intended for our happiness (1 Timothy 6:17, James 1:17). But if we do not honour God with these gifts and use them selfishly, then the blessings become curses (Malachi 2:2).

42. How to Choose your Life Partner

Mr. A was very worried about the marriage of his daughter because she was nearly twenty seven years old. All his relatives were asking him why he was not getting her married. It was common for young girls in his community to be married before the age of twenty. But his daughter was not worried about it. She was happy in her work. She had committed her life to Christ and she knew that He would bring the right person to her. One day a proposal came which asked very much. The boy was of the same caste and was in a good job. The dowry and jewels which his family asked were not beyond the resources of Mr. A and so he was very pleased. When he explained this to the pastor, he asked about the boy's Christian commitment. Mr. A was surprised that that should be a criterion. Interestingly he said to the pastor, "He does attend church now and but he is a good boy, very sincere and does not have any bad habits. My daughter will bring him to the spiritual way." He did not think that marriage does not bring about spiritual changes if there is no love or commitment before. The pastor had his reservations but went ahead with the marriage.

Months after the marriage Mr. A was a very worried and sad man because the young man kept harassing Mr. A's daughter that she should give more money and some vessels and other articles from her dowry. Finally he sent her out saying that she should not return unless she brought those things. There was no way out of this situation except to give in. so Mr. A sent his daughter with all the things her husband demanded. A child was born to them. After few months, they were separated again and the young man took the son. This time the separation seemed to be permanent. This is a typical case which is repeated again and again in our Christian communities.

Important Considerations in choosing Life Partners

What are the most important considerations for young people to choose their life partners?

1. Parental Guidance

What are the considerations for parents to choose suitable life

partners for their children? Sometimes the question is asked, "Should the young people themselves choose their life partners? Or should their parents choose for them? We cannot say that one method is better than the other. In both methods there have been casualties. Parents have chosen life partners for their children with worldly considerations for caste, money and status and have wrecked their lives. Young people have chosen their life partners under the impulse of an immediate infatuation and have wrecked their lives and future. Whichever method is followed, the Lord must be honoured.

In our culture it is common for parents to choose the life partners for their children. In this case, parents must submit their wills and selfish ambitions to the Lord and seek His guidance for their children. They should also consider their children's wishes their spiritual condition and their witness for the Lord when they choose their life partners.

II. Children's Choice

In some circles the children do have the freedom to choose their life partners. In this case they must surrender their wills and desires to the Lord and seek His will. One important consideration should be that the life partner must be a committed Christian.

In giving instruction to the people of Israel before they went into Canaan the Lord said "You shall not make marriages with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons. For they would turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods" (Deuteronomy 7: 3, 4). The reason for forbidding those inter-marriages was spiritual and not racial. Believers were asked not to marry unbelievers lest their hearts be turned away from following the Lord. The Israelites disobeyed God and as a result we see their failures listed in the prophetic books. They became idolatrous and worshipped other gods. They adopted the moral standards, the values and the life style of the unbelieving nations. They failed in their calling to be witnesses to those nations.

III. Do not be unequally yoked together

This principle concerning the marriage of believers is upheld in the

New Testament also. II Corinthians 6: 14, 15 say, "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what partnership have righteousness and iniquity? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?" Compatibility in education and other matters is good. But compatibility in faith is the most important factor. Many marriages have resulted in unhappiness when committed Christians have married either non-Christians or nominal Christians. If a full time Christian worker or pastor is seeking to get married, he must see that his life partner has a call or inclination to share his ministry and his vision. Otherwise his ministry will be affected.

King Solomon's marriage in the Old Testament ended tragically. He married many wives contrary to what God had said: "He (the king in Israel) shall not multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away" (Deuteronomy 17:17). Also he married women from the nations from whom the Israelites were commanded not to choose their life partners (I Kings 11: 1,2). As a result, "When Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart was not wholly true to the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father" (I Kings 11: 4). Sometimes the parent or the young person may say, "We will change the partner after marriage." This never works! On the other hand, the young person with a sincere devotion of Christ may find that his own heart slowly slips away from that devotion when he marries in disobedience to God's direction. God must be honoured in this most important choice in life. This does not mean that we should not look for good looks or suitable educational qualifications or other considerations.

God's will

The most important consideration should be the spiritual qualification and God's will in the matter. Other things should be secondary. Looking at the horoscope and consulting the astrologer are forbidden for God's people. "There shall not be found among you..... anyone who practices divination, a soothsayer, or an augur, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or a medium, or a

wizard, or a necromancer. For whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord" (Deuteronomy 18:10-12).

In the same way going to those who profess to have the gift of prophecy and asking their opinion concerning the choice of a life partner can also lead to serious consequences. This happens because of a misunderstanding of how the gift of prophecy is to be exercised in the fellowship of the body of Christ and must be subjected to the test of God's Word and acceptance by other members of the body of Christ. We can consult other Christians who are spiritually mature and get their suggestions. But we must receive the direction of the Lord ourselves through His Word and through His Spirit. When the Holy Spirit is confirmed by His Word and by other believers, we can move in that direction.

V. God's purpose for Marriage

In choosing a life partner either for our children or for ourselves we must keep in mind God's purpose for marriage. We should not look only for our selfish gratification. The questions to ask are, "Will this marriage help me to fulfill God's goals for my married life? Will this partner help me in my Christian life and service?"

God has a plan for each life and it is good plan. He is eager that we find His plan for our lives and live happy and useful lives. So we need not worry about missing His plan if we sincerely seek His face.

43. The Christian and Divorce

One of the alarming sociological signs of our times is the widespread breakdown of families. This is increasingly evident among Christians also. This is not merely a western malady. In our country also divorce and legal separation are becoming common. What does the Bible say about divorce?

The marriage relationship is an exclusive relationship.

"A man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). This verse indicates God's intention when He instituted marriage. It should be an exclusive relationship. Polygamy is not God's will for man. It came in human history because of man's sin. Just because men like Abraham, Job and David had more than one wife, it does not mean that God allows polygamy. "Each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband" (1 Corinthians 7:2).

Genesis 2:24 also indicates that **the marriage relationship is a permanent relationship**. 1 Corinthians 7:10 forbids divorce. "To the married I give charge, not I but the Lord, that the wife should not separate from her husband". The problem that Paul discussed in 1 Corinthians 7:12-16 is that of believers married to unbelievers. The believer should not divorce his/her partner because she/he is an unbeliever but should live with her/him. By their life of faith and patience and through their prayers, they may win them to the Lord. However, if the unbelieving partner chooses to separate, the believer should remain single or be reconciled to the partner when opportunity comes (1 Corinthians 7:11, 15). It is clear from this teaching that divorce is not an easy option even if the other partner is not a Christian. If the person is the offended party in a divorce, he/she should not seek to remarry in a hurry but should remain single and patiently wait for the other partner to be reconciled to him/her.

The prophet **Malachi** spoke to the people of God about their failures. One of their failures was the breakdown in their family life which led to divorce. Israelite men were seduced by women of other faiths and so they divorced the wives whom they had married in their young age and married those women. God condemned this through

the prophet. This was the result of the total breakdown of the spiritual life of the people. In the earlier chapters the prophet was pointing out the disobedience of the people. Then he said, "Have we not all one father? Has not one God created us? Why then are we faithless to one another, profaning the covenant of our fathers?" (Malachi 1:10).

When they were unfaithful to God and broke the covenant with Him, they became unfaithful in all their relationships. This was the basic reason that led to their family breakdown. They became unfaithful to their wives and then divorced them.

The marriage covenant was sacred because God was the witness and when they became unfaithful and broke that covenant, he was grieved. He would not accept their offerings, nor hear their prayers, or approve their service (Malachi 1:13, 14). He said, "I hate divorce and covering one's garment with violence" (Malachi 1:16) considering divorce as equal to a violent act. How true this is! Any person who has gone through divorce will tell us that it is like death. Something dies within the divorced person. There is the death of their sense of security and self-worth. To cause this damage emotionally, psychologically and spiritually is like murder. Divorce should not be treated lightly because it hurts the other partner. Often in a divorce the partner who is seeking separation thinks of his/her happiness and satisfaction only. Selfishness is often the cause of divorce.

To sum up, the process of failure that culminates in divorce is a downward process and each step is a downward step. It begins with a careless attitude to God. Unfaithfulness begins in the person's relationship to God. Then, it leads to unfaithfulness in the marriage relationship. The next step is a selfish obsession with one's own happiness and pleasure. It is followed by a callous, heartless attitude towards the partner resulting in divorce.

When does a marriage bond become null and void?

Death breaks the marriage bond. "A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. If the husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 7:39). "A married

Woman is bound by law to her husband as long as he lives; but if her husband dies she is discharged from the law concerning the husband. Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress" (Romans 7:2, 3).

Adultery also breaks the marriage bond. I Corinthians 6:16 says, "Do you not know that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, 'The two shall become one flesh, RSV margin)' So the "one flesh relationship" with the married partner is broken when the husband/wife enters into a sinful "one flesh relationship" with another person. That is why our Lord permitted divorce in the case of adultery. "I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another, commits adultery" (Matthew 19:9). This is a difficult verse to interpret. There are some who interpret that though divorce is permitted on the grounds of adultery, remarriage is not permitted even for the offended party. Others would say that Jesus was not permitting the remarriage of a person who divorced for reasons other than adultery. We must combine strictly the high view of marriage expressed in the Bible with the compassion and grace of Christ when we deal with these issues. Jesus forbade divorce on the basis of the "one flesh relationship" which marriage signifies. He said, "They are no longer two but one (one flesh). What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matthew 19:6).

Marriage was instituted by God and He places a great value on it. God Himself is the witness in the marriage covenant. So it is not to be treated lightly or cast aside easily. Divorce is an abomination to God. It is not His best for man. But because of human sin and rebellion it may be allowed in cases of marital unfaithfulness and adultery. In such cases, there must always be provision for eventual repentance and reconciliation. The offended partner must be willing to accept the guilty partner if he/she repents and comes back to God/him. Remarriage may be considered prayerfully only after all the possibilities of reconciliation and restoration are exhausted.

44. Spiritual Life in the Home

In many Christian homes we see a plaque with the words: CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THIS HOUSE. This is the basic secret of spiritual life in the home, namely, Christ being the Head (the Lord) of the Home. Paul points out the centrality of Christ in all the relationships at home. "Wives, submit to your husbands as to **the Lord**..... Husbands, love your wives, **just as Christ loved** the church and gave Himself up for her....Children obey your parents **in the Lord**, for this is right....Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction **of the Lord**" (Ephesians 5:22, 25; 6:1, 4)

I. Christ is the Lord of the Family

What does it mean to have Christ as the Lord of the family?

First, each individual member of the family must personally accept Christ as Saviour and Lord. This is basic. It will be wonderful if both husband and wife know Christ in this way. Then, they can pray together for their children and bring them one by one into a personal commitment to Christ. There is nothing more powerful than the united prayer of the parents to bring about spiritual transformation in the lives of the children. Jesus promised, "If two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven" (Mathew 18:19). The two can be the husband and wife. Look at the spiritual authority that is promised to them in such united prayer. "Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven" (Mathew 18:18). Through their united prayer parents can see their children delivered from evil habits such as drugs and drinking. That is why harmony between the parents and their own commitment to Christ are important for the spiritual life of the home. A godly couple used to pray for each of their children standing near their bedside every night after they had gone to sleep. It is no wonder that every one of those children followed the Lord.

Christ must be honoured and obeyed as Lord by each member of the family. Also, corporately the family must honour the Lord and

obey Him. His will must be sought in prayer and through the study of scripture and in each decision and each choice His will must be done. The question is asked, "How can people with independent wills live together in a home without clashing with each other?" This is achieved sometimes by one dominant will conquering other wills and suppressing them. A dominant man may suppress his wife and the children and rule like a dictator in the home. A dominant woman may also do the same. In such cases the children are not able to grow normally. They carry deep scars in their personalities which make them shy and self-conscious and create an inferiority complex which makes them misfits in human relationships. Harmony is not achieved by conquering and subduing. If each will is surrendered to Christ's will, then His will is supreme and in that submission we find harmony in the home.

What if the husband or the wife is not a committed Christian? A mother with three children asked, "How can I bring up my children in the faith? I am alone, my husband is a drunkard and he has no interest in spiritual matters. He doesn't even come to family prayer." I told her, "You do have a handicap but you need not give up. The Lord is on your side. If you trust Him and obey Him and pray for the members of your family, He will give them to you. Through one believing member of the family, the Lord will save the whole family (Acts 16:31)". So she continued to honour the Lord in her personal life, brought the children up in the nurture of the Lord and had family prayer with them daily. Five years later, I met her beaming with joy and saying, "My husband has come to the Lord and my children also walk with the Lord. Now we serve Him as a family." How true this is! Instead of complaining about the other partner's ungodliness and slandering him or her, if we honour the Lord and trust Him, He will work in our families.

II. The Holy Spirit is the Source of Power of the Family

It takes supernatural power to live godly lives and be witnesses in our own homes. I have heard Christians say, "In my own home I lose my testimony. I am not a good example, I get angry and fight". The most difficult place to be spiritual is often the home. That is why before he wrote about family relationships Paul said, "Be filled with

the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18). We often think that the fullness of the Holy Spirit is only for public ministry. But here Paul points out that it is needed for spiritual life in the home.

First, we must listen to the Holy Spirit and do what He says in our life in the home. He guides us through constraints and restraints and we must be sensitive to both. Obedience to the Spirit brings His power and strength to us.

The most important aspect of this obedience is a readiness to accept one's failure promptly and seek forgiveness and cleansing from the Lord and acknowledge it before other members of the family. To apologize to each other and seek reconciliation may seem culturally unusual but it is the scriptural way. Parents should be willing to apologize to children if they had wronged them and the husband and wife should be willing to apologize to each other when they hurt each other.

The famous preacher D.L. Moody was once upset with his sons when they trampled upon the flower beds and ruined the garden. He spoke harshly giving vent to his anger. In the evening when the boys had retired to their bedroom, they heard footsteps on the stairs and knew that their father was coming up. They were scared that he was going to scold them again. Instead he came and placed his arms around them gently and apologized to them. He said, "Forgive me, boys, for getting angry with you. What you did was wrong but my spirit was not right in disciplining you." Years later, the sons remembered this humble act of their father. Walking in the Spirit and in the light in transparent behavior pays in the intimate relationships of the home. We may not walk around in the home with a halo around our heads as perfect beings but we can walk in the light in sincerity.

Secondly there must be dependence on Him. For all the challenges and problems in the home, we must depend on Him and not on our own strength and wisdom. When obedience to the Spirit and dependence on Him become a part of the lifestyle at home, children growing in that atmosphere will certainly imbibe those principles. Often it is not through conscious exhortation but through

conscious example that children are influenced and transformed.

Prayer is the Daily Exercise of the Family

Just as prayer is like breathing to an individual Christian, it is also to the family. It must be the atmosphere in which they live and move about. Without this it will be difficult to say, "Christ is the Lord of the family and the Holy Spirit is the Source of Power."

Prayer at meals is one of the times set apart for the family to pray together each day. This should not become a dull routine. It can be made interesting by introducing variety. Sometimes a little chorus of thanksgiving can be sung or a well known prayer said from memory by the entire family. Every member of the family can take turns to pray at meals, including the youngest child who can be made to repeat the grace he is taught. It is better not to let the youngest child or any other member of the family do it all the time. At breakfast a small devotional portion can be read and prayer offered for the family, for the Church and for missionaries. The family should wait until each member is at the table before prayer.

Family Prayer must be an important part of the life at home. The spiritual life of the family is often measured by this. As the saying goes, "The family that prays together stays together." I have been much blessed through the Family prayers when I stay in homes in India. In many homes time is set apart for prayer early in the morning and in the evening before retiring to bed. A song is sung and portions of Scripture are read and then prayer is offered. The father in the home must take the initiative and assume leadership in conducting family prayer. Each member of the family should be encouraged to participate. If the father is not committed to the Lord and is not interested, the mother should take the initiative and gather the family together for prayer.

A Sample of 'Praying Hyde'

Family prayer should not be a mere children's affair with only children reading the Scripture and praying every time. The children should see the father and mother praying and reading the Bible. The story of John Hyde, a Presbyterian missionary who came to Punjab in

the early 1900s is well known. He came to be known as Praying Hyde because he was a man of prayer. He grew up in a godly home. His father, a Presbyterian minister, would call the family together every evening for prayer and would open the large family Bible and read from it. After that he would lead in prayer remembering the missionaries and their work around the world. When he prayed, tears would flow down his cheeks and his face shone. Young John Hyde loved to watch his father's face when he was praying. Right then, early in his life, he decided that he would become a missionary and a man of prayer. It is no wonder that he became Praying Hyde.

To create interest in Family prayer and to encourage participation, discussions and questions can be encouraged on the Scriptures used. Variety and various Family prayer aids can be used.

Besides these, there can also be **special times of prayer**. When there is a crisis in the family, a problem, a financial need or sickness, the father should call the family together for prayer. Children will learn how the parents depend upon the Lord for all their needs.

IV. The Bible is the Guide of the Family

In any family there are numerous decisions and choices to be made. Some of them are big and some small. The spiritual life of the family is reflected in the way these decisions are made. For every decision or choice, there must be a point of reference and certain basic considerations. Often the decisions are influenced by the opinions of family members and relatives, pressure of contemporary culture and traditions and customs. For a Christian the point of reference must be our Lord Jesus Christ and His Word and the basic consideration is that we please Him through our decisions and choices.

1. Bible Study

If the Bible is the Guide for each member of the family, the study of the Bible is very important. Parents should learn the Scripture through personal Bible study and through the opportunities the Church provides. Children should be encouraged to study the Bible personally and to attend the Sunday school, Vacation Bible

School and use other opportunities to learn the Scriptures. For their personal Bible study, Scripture Union Bible study notes and other guides can be provided. Just as parents take all personal steps to give their children secular education, so should they have the same zeal and care to see that their children receive biblical education. A casual approach to the Sunday school and other means that the church provides should be avoided.

The object of such Bible study is not merely to gain factual knowledge but to imbibe biblical principles which will help in molding values and making right decisions and choices. The practice of giving the early morning time to commune with the Lord and to listen to Him as He speaks through the Bible should be cultivated and imparted to the children.

2. Christian Education

In this Christian nurture and biblical education of the children, the father must take the initiative. "Fathers, do not exasperate your children, instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). If the father fails, the mother must take up the responsibility. In the case of Timothy, his mother and grandmother trained him in the Scripture (II Timothy 1:5, 3:15-17). Notice that we are "trained in righteousness" through the Scripture, so that we are "equipped for every good work". The expression "man of God" does not denote a spiritual specialist but one who belongs to God. "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

From the beginning God wanted the people of Israel to impart spiritual instruction to their children. When they were about to enter Canaan, He told them, "These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up" (Deuteronomy 6:6, 7). Note that this instruction should be informal and given in actual life situations. Children learn more by

watching their parents exercise their faith and express their obedience to the Lord in actual life situations. They also learn through informal conversations. During a severe financial crisis, when there was no food in the home, a father and mother gathered their children and read the passage of Scripture where Elijah was fed by the ravens, and they committed their need to the Lord in prayer. Just before the mealtime, a friend arrived with a lot of food and told them how the Lord told him to take that food to them. That day the children learned a lesson in trusting the Lord for their needs which they would never forget!

God told His people, "Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the door frames of your houses and on your gates" (Deuteronomy 6:8, 9). The Word of God should control our actions (hands), our thoughts and plans (foreheads), our family life (door frames of houses) and our business life (gates).

V. The Church is the Spiritual Home of the Family

The family is an important unit of the Church. The Church consists of not only individual members but of households (Acts 16:15, 33; 18:8). There must be a close relationship between the family and the Church. **Regular church attendance** fosters spiritual growth. It is a blessing for the whole family to attend the worship service together. Sometimes the father may take the child to the Sunday school but never attend the Church. Soon the child learns to resent church attendance. Love for the church and the worship services must be created in the hearts of the children from their early days through example.

A healthy attitude must be created towards the church in the minds of the children. Unkind, critical remarks about the church members, the pastor and the committee members will create negative attitudes in the minds of the children and drive them away from the church. Someone has said that in many homes all they have for Sunday lunch is "roast preacher"! Parents must be careful about what they say about the church and the pastor before their children. Sometimes children are introduced into church politics by involving

them in church elections for canvassing etc. This gives a wrong picture of the church to them.

The family **must be supportive** of the local church in which they are members. Taking part in the strife and division of the congregation will affect the spiritual life of the family, particularly of the children. There may be things that the pastor or the committees do which the family may not agree with. There is nothing wrong with taking up these issues with the persons concerned. But there should be no feud. On the other hand, they must support the church by participating in the programme and by giving their tithes and offerings.

The Bible exhorts us to give our tithes for the support of the Lord's work. "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this, says the Lord Almighty, 'and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it'" (Malachi 3:10). The purpose of bringing the tithe into the storehouse of the temple is to provide food for those who serve in the temple. The tithe is to be used to support those who serve in the temple. It is not to be used as we please. Even if we use the tithe to support other ministries, the major portion of it must be given to the local church. Children must be taught to give out of what they get though it may be very little.

The family is God's gift and it must be a channel of blessing to others and the means of bringing glory to God.

XI. Missions and Beyond the Boundaries

45. Understanding Church Growth in the Indian Perspective

The words "Church Growth" bring to our mind expressions such as "Homogeneous Unit Principle", "Win the winnable" and "Discipling the nations." It is natural because these expressions and concepts have come to be known as part of the "Church Growth School of missiology". Missiology as a science has become prominent in the past forty years. Exponents of the Church Growth School had played a vital role in this. We pay tribute to them for their insights and bold strategies. They had a significant part in pulling missions out of a status quo defeatist attitude to reach out to the unreached peoples of the world.

I. Development of Mission Trends

They had also shown us how anthropological and sociological insights and an understanding of the cultures of peoples can make missionaries more effective in winning people to Christ. The use of management science in setting goals and evaluating performance is a valuable contribution they have made to missions. They have also taught us to think of bringing whole communities and not just individuals into the Church. We have been led to think of missions in ethnic terms and not just in geographical terms. This has revolutionized missionary thinking and practice leading to new strategies. It makes the missionary task more definable and achievable and gives directions and goals in doing missions.

All this is very valuable to us who are doing missions in India because ours is a land of many cultures and linguistic and ethnic groups. We are many nations in one country. When we see the task not in geographical terms but in terms of people groups, it is easier to strategize and set goals. It also helps us to see the beauty and the value of the variety of cultures in our land. The mosaic of these cultures and languages is beautiful and we need not destroy these in discipling the people groups who belong to them. Such an approach will bring enrichment to the Church and answer the criticism that Christianity destroys the national, ethnic and cultural fabric of a people.

II. Dangers to avoid

Having seen the positive contribution of the Church Growth School to missions in India, we must also be aware of the dangers.

1. Missions is a divine enterprise. It begins from God and centres on Him. Its goal is to bring glory to God. When we focus our attention on results and the means to achieve those results, the danger is that it may become a humanistic effort with a tendency to depend on human smartness.
2. The spirit of triumphalism is another danger. In India the image that captivates our people is that of the servant. Suffering and sacrifice are always associated with service. This is the model that Mahatma Gandhi gave to this nation. It is a scriptural model. The image of the conqueror with the spirit of triumphalism can provoke unnecessary suspicion and hostility. When we put our emphasis on numbers and make numerical success the goal of missions, we may stir up communalism. Also, this is far from the Spirit of Christ.
3. When we emphasize the discipling of nations (ethnic groups) as opposed to individual conversions, we may rule out certain groups like Muslims and upper caste Hindus among whom conversion of individuals is the most common response. We should not ignore this while seeking to bring in whole communities to Christ. William Carey took seven years to win one Krishna pal. But Krishna pal went as a missionary to the Khasis and through the few Khasis whom he won and discipled a people movement began among the Khasis.

Certainly we are aware that the community is important in the Bible. While western individualism should be discarded, we should not ignore biblical personalism. The person is important in the Bible and the personal approach is Christian.

4. In an earlier age missionaries bought huge properties and built mission compounds in unresponsive areas and poured in a lot of money and manpower in these places staying on there for many years. We should not repeat this mistake. We should move into areas where the harvest is ready and there is response. If we do not win the winnable now, they may not be winnable in a few years' time. If we do not reap when the

harvest is ready, we may lose the harvest.

On the other hand, we must recognize that there are certain areas where ploughing, plodding and sowing are needed. This too is missionary work. If we are reaping the harvest now in some areas, it is because others have ploughed the ground, plodded and sowed the seed. IEM is working in Kullu valley and has planted some churches. When we entered there in 1968 we found a good response. When I mentioned this to a missionary doctor in England, he said that he and others had labored in those areas for twenty-five years without seeing much fruit. We are reaping the harvest now because he and his colleagues had worked hard breaking the ground, ploughing and sowing. Jesus said, "Thus the saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true. I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labour" (John 4:37, 38).

Without the willingness to stay on even if we do not see great response immediately, we cannot reach the Muslims, Sindhis, Sikhs and other closed communities like them.

5. Management science plays an important role in much of Church Growth thinking. There is a danger here. Management science worships at the shrine of success. Achievement and productivity are very important while other values and considerations that matter in Scriptures are ignored. The pragmatic approach dominates. The Church and Missions can easily become slaves to the management culture which dominates the world today. Certainly we can benefit from management principles, techniques and tools but these must always be tested in the light of Scripture.

Not only our message but our methods also should be biblical. While we consider the importance of time, we should also consider the value of human relationships. While we keep our eyes on the goals, we should also consider the rightness of the means used. While we aim at productivity, we should also consider the redemptive

development of the people in the programme and the right use of our resources. We should not merely be result-oriented. We should also be people-oriented and personal in our dealings. We are not interested merely in conversions but in the making of disciples. We should not emphasize quantity at the expense of quality. Paul wrote, "We have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God" (2 Corinthians 4:2). Distorting the message or manipulating the people to achieve desired results is not worthy of Christian missionary service.

6. The insights of the social sciences and the conclusions of cultural studies are valuable in missions. But they should be brought under the scrutiny and control of Scripture. It is not Missions Somehow but Missions in Christ's Way!
7. The Homogeneous Unit Principle is a useful tool in missions but it should not be used without discernment. In the name of Church Growth we should not foster casteism or racial segregation. To bring the Indian caste system under the application of this principle without proper scrutiny will do a great harm to the future unity of the Church in India. The early missionaries who came to India did not realize the religious nature of the caste system. They thought that it was a mere cultural and sociological phenomenon and allowed it to persist in the Church. As a result, separate caste churches were built and Christians of different castes could not participate in the Lord's Supper together. We are reaping the consequences of this in our dioceses and churches today at the time of elections. In some dioceses, a person of the minority caste can never become a bishop however suitable he may be. Do we want to perpetuate this state of affairs now even if it be in the name of Church growth? What testimony will our churches have in caste-ridden India?

It is often argued as did the Governor of Andhra Pradesh in a recent Christian consultation that caste is not a typical Hindu phenomenon but it is also found among Buddhists and Muslims in our country. We must remember that this is a carry-over from the Hindu background in these religions. It is not native to them just as it is not native to Christianity. It is also said that having

formed caste churches, we can teach the converts about the true nature of the body of Christ and about unity in Christ. But experience tells us that this is easier to say than to do. Unless we present the true Gospel which breaks down all barriers through the Cross of Christ, we cannot foster unity in the Church. This is not a post-Gospel issue. The reconciling work of Christ is a part of the Gospel. He reconciles not only man to God, but also man to man. "He himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility" (Ephesians 2:14).

If the village is homogeneous with all the people belonging to one caste, then there is no need to bring people from another caste from another village to be included in this church. The church can be homogeneous. But if the village is heterogeneous, then the church should be heterogeneous. We should not form separate caste churches pampering the caste pride of the people so we can have numerical church growth. In one of our IEM mission fields there is one church for both the higher and the lower caste people and it had not prevented them from coming to Christ and joining the church.

Certainly there is a place for forming separate linguistic and cultural churches so the people can worship more freely in their own languages according to their cultural patterns. Thus we can have separate Tamil churches, Marathi churches and Hindi churches. But there is no need to have separate Tamil Nadar churches and Tamil Vellala churches. That will be a contradiction of the Gospel. We cannot evade the narrow way and have easy church growth!

If the Church in India should be strong reflecting the beauty and purity of Christ, we must be careful that the methods and strategies we follow are God-honouring and biblical. We should not blindly accept formulae and moulds churned out elsewhere and handed out to us.

46. Indian Missions

Historical background

Missionary interest began in the Indian Church long before it began anywhere else in Asia. The spirit of revival in the Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Kerala led to the formation of the Mar Thoma Evangelistic Association in 1888. In 1903 under the leadership of Bishop V.S. Azariah the Indian Missionary Society was formed in the Trinnevelly diocese of the Anglican Church. Two years later (1905) Bishop Azariah along with other national Christians and a few expatriates like Dr. Sherwood Eddy, was responsible for the formation of the National Missionary Society. Both these societies began their work in India sending missionaries cross culturally. After this there was a period of stagnation in the history of Indian missions. Spiritual lethargy, nominalism and influence of liberal theology killed the evangelistic and missionary zeal of the Church. In the early fifties there was a fresh breath of revival and new life in the churches in South India. It was at this time that the Evangelical Fellowship of India was also born. Missionary interest was revived. This led to the formation of the Indian Evangelical Overseas Mission in 1954 as the missionary arm of the E.F.I. Later in 1965 this mission took a new shape with the name Indian Evangelical Mission. In this same period, other indigenous missionary movements sprang up mostly in South India.

I. Denominational Missions

The Mar Thoma Church is the reformed branch of the Syrian Orthodox Church which exists in India from the first century. The Mar Thoma Evangelistic Association sent evangelists to other parts of India to work among people of other languages and cultures. The faith, courage and self-sacrifice of these missionaries are highly commendable. They were the first missionaries of the Gospel to enter Nepal after Sadhu Sundar Singh. In some places they carry on medical and educational work along with evangelism. Community living is practiced by these missionary families. These communities are called ashrams. In most of their mission fields there are congregations of new believers.

Some of the dioceses of the Church of South India have set up mission boards and sent missionaries cross culturally. New churches have been planted in these areas. The Methodist Church has its own Board of Missions with missionaries in cross cultural situations. The Church of North India has sent a missionary family to East Africa and another family to the Fiji islands. The Mizo Presbyterian Church and the Mizo Baptist Church from North East India have sent missionaries to other tribes in the hills of Assam, Tripura and Manipur. The Naga Baptist Churches have also sent missionaries to other tribes in the north eastern region.

There is no special missionary training given for these missionaries. Most of them do have some Bible training. Support for them comes from the denominational budget which is met by contributions from the local churches. There is no personalized support. There is very little exposure of the missionaries to the supporting churches.

II. Inter denominational Missions

1. Their nature

The intensity and zeal of the missionary awakening of the Indian Christians is expressed more through the numerous interdenominational missions rather than the denominational ones. Most of these para church missionary agencies have their origin in South India. They are regional in nature. Their workers, Board members and support are all from one state or one language group. The National Missionary Society and the Indian Evangelical Mission are the only nation wide movements. Their workers, supporters and Board members are drawn from all over the country. The National Missionary Society has work in Nepal. The Indian Evangelical Mission has sent missionaries to Nepal, West Asia and Papua, New Guinea. All other Indian missions work in cross cultural situations within India.

The Church in South India being the strongest numerically and spiritually, it is not surprising that the initiative and dynamism for missions comes from there. Next to the South, the Church in North East India is numerically and spiritually strong.

Missionaries from these areas have gone out to the neighbouring tribes in the region. Unfortunately, the vision to send missionaries to the vast unreached areas of North India is yet to grip the tribal Christians of North East India.

2. Support

Some of our Indian missions get most of their support from within the country while others are partly or fully supported by overseas funds. Those who are supported from within the country get their support from individual believers, local churches and prayer bands. The National Missionary Society and the Indian Missionary Society are officially backed by the large denominations. The Friends Missionary Prayer Band and the Indian Evangelical Mission are largely supported by prayer groups and local churches. Churches and individuals are challenged through frequent missionary meetings and conventions and as a result individual supporters are enlisted and missionary prayer groups are formed. Local representatives are appointed to keep in touch with the supporters. The monthly missionary magazine provides the missionary news and prayer information for the supporters. Area wise and State wise missionary conferences held annually bring the supporters together for spiritual renewal and strength.

Personalized support is common. A prayer band or a local church or sometimes even a family takes care of the support of a missionary family. A local church may sometimes support missionaries from two or three missions. Missionaries are not expected to raise their own support. Sometimes instead of money, gifts in kind are given. In one place, every time the house wife cooks a meal of rice, she puts aside a handful of rice as missionary offering. In another place a hen is set apart for missions so that its eggs are sold and the money used for missionary offering.

3. Training

Several Indian missions have their own Bible schools to train their workers. Special missionary training is not given in these

schools. To fill this void, the Indian Missionary Training Institute was launched in 1976 as a partnership effort between the Indian Evangelical Mission and the Bible and Medical Missionary Fellowship. Now, other Indian missions are also using the Institute for training their missionaries. Wycliffe Bible Translators send their workers for a short term to teach linguistics in the Institute. At present only a short three months course is given. We hope that in future this Institute would become a common Missionary Training Institute for all Indian missions. It will be a partnership effort between the Indian missions on one side and overseas missions which are willing to help on the other side.

III. India Missions Association

The need to bring the different Indian Missions together was felt for a long time. Attempts were made on different occasions to have consultations between them. Then the All India Congress on Missions and Evangelization sounded a strong call for such cooperation and gave the impetus to the formation of an association of Indian missions. So the India Missions Association was formed in March 1977. At present there are eleven members in the Association. Some missions will join the Association once they come to fulfill the conditions of membership.

Altogether we have identified twenty Indian missions involved in cross cultural work. Some of them are very small without even a full time administrator. Others are large with well-developed organizational structures. All these are indigenous in origin and government.

Sowing and Reaping

Indian missions are sincerely grappling with certain issues which others might have already resolved. To work out proper organizational structures and administrative procedures which will combine efficiency in work and the right stewardship of money and time is one such issue. To provide proper pastoral care for the missionaries and to work out procedures of planning and evaluating their work is another major issue. To provide for the health and

children's education of missionaries as well as to plan for the nurture of the new converts and for leadership training for the new churches are other major issues. The IMA hopes to hold seminars and conferences using the experience and expertise of western mission leaders for the benefit of our Indian mission leaders.

Most of the Indian missionaries are involved in direct evangelism and church planting work. There is very little medical or educational work. Two missions are involved in Bible translation in tribal dialects. Otherwise Bible translation and adult literacy are two important aspects of pioneer missionary work which are yet to get the attention of Indian missions.

In some areas where Indian missions are plodding on for several years it is sowing time. But in other areas, this is harvest time with all the excitement and joy that goes with it. In south Gujarat, the Friends Missionary Prayer Band reports that in 18 months nearly 500 baptisms have taken place and 12 new congregations have been formed. In Hubli, Karnataka state, the Full Gospel Young Men Association reports many conversions. In Tripura the Church is growing among the tribals with about 1000 baptisms a year. The Indian Evangelical Mission reports baptisms in Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and among the tribals in Andhra Pradesh. In Kashmir among the most difficult people, the Muslims, the National Missionary Society reports continuous response.

A disturbing fact in the Indian missionary scene is the situation in Arunachal Pradesh, a state bordering China in the north-east corner. This is a predominantly tribal area. There is a moving of the Spirit here resulting in many baptisms and new churches. This has aroused the hostility of non-Christian government officials in this area. An anti-conversion law has been passed in the State legislative assembly in spite of protests from Christians all over India. Already this law is in force in three states. It may be passed in other states also. Indian missions may have a period of testing ahead of them.

47. World Missions: The Asian Challenge

This is the first gathering of Asian missionaries, mission leaders and representatives of Asian churches for the cause of world missions ever to be held with such grass roots representation. Our gathering is significant for several reasons:

1. The continent of Asia has nearly two-thirds of the world's population and the largest segment of unreached peoples in the world.
2. Asia is a continent of many religions, ideologies, languages and cultures. This poses a great challenge for missions.
3. Asia is the place of origin for many religions of the world such as Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, etc.
4. Asia is where human history began and will reach its consummation. The church began here and the Gospel went from Asia to other countries. As my beloved brother, Dr. Petrus Octavianus, has often said, it has reached full circle, and now once again it will go out from Asia to the rest of the world. This is the theme of our congress.
5. Asia has the largest number of restricted access countries. Religious fundamentalism is on the rampage and has led to violence and bloodshed in several countries of Asia. It has also led to opposition to the Gospel and persecution of the church. This rise of religious fundamentalism has led to the politicizing of religion and the religionising of politics. When we think of Asia, we should not limit ourselves to East Asia and South Asia. Our brothers and sisters from the struggling churches in West Asia are also a part of the church in Asia. The challenge of Asia is very obvious there in the unreached and inaccessible masses of people held under the control of Islam. It is also obvious in the Communist lands of China, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and North Korea.
6. God is at work in Asia. The church is growing at a phenomenal rate in several countries of Asia, and there is revival in the church in many regions. The number of Asian missions and missionaries is also growing, as seen from this gathering. Among the growing number of Two Thirds World missionaries, the majority are Asians.

With this background let us look at Matthew 16:18. Jesus said, "I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not overcome it." This was the great manifesto of the King. He declared His programme to His disciples. The church has a central place in missions.

In some of our Asian countries missions is carried on largely by para church missionary agencies, while in others, local churches have a key role. These need not be mutually exclusive or contradictory. We see the role of the local church in missions in the New Testament, but we also see God's hand in the rise and role of Para-church missionary movements in history. The Para-church missionary agency is not a substitute for the church. It is only a scaffold put up to build the church.

The goal is to build the church of Jesus Christ. In these days when much is said about the Kingdom of God in relation to missions, we must remember that the church is the witness and the signpost to the Kingdom. It is the beachhead of the Kingdom. We cannot speak about the Kingdom and ignore the church. Creating missions awareness in the churches and the missionary education of the local churches are important parts of our missionary task. Whether it is short-term missionary service or tent making, the challenge to build the church among unreached people should not be ignored. We should not miss our focus on the missionary task and concentrate on the sending and the structure. We must also note that it is our Lord who builds His church. His role and involvement in it cannot be neglected. The planting of churches is not just a human effort carried out by human cleverness depending upon anthropological and sociological insights. It is done in dependence on the Lord who is building His church in the world.

In this programme, which our Lord outlined, we note the context, the confession, the conflict, the cost and the commitment.

I. The Context

This declaration of Jesus' manifesto came in the middle of His ministry. It is significant that He made this declaration at Caesarea

Philippi (Matt. 16:13). Caesarea Philippi had many religions, temples and gods. There was a large temple dedicated to Caesar. In such a context of pluralism Jesus said that He would build His church.

Ours is also a pluralistic world. According to statistics, Islam and Hinduism are growing fast. They are also assuming an antagonistic posture in several countries. Today the challenge to the Gospel does not come as much from atheistic Communism as it does from religious fundamentalism.

This is not the time to retreat or withdraw. In such a context our Lord is building His church and is calling us to work along with Him.

Having seen the **religious context**, we must also note the tremendous **social needs**, in the midst of which we have to present the Gospel. Unrest and violence among ethnic groups and religious groups are increasing in several Asian countries. There is growing *affluence and increasing poverty* existing side by side in our continent. Population explosion and *rapid urbanization* are to be seriously noted. With rapid urbanization come the problems of urban poverty and increasing slums. Lack of jobs, lack of shelter and an alarming rate of infant mortality, along with the sad plight of children and women, are common phenomena in most Asian countries. The number of child prostitutes and street children is alarming, and yet in some Asian countries very little is done to face this challenge with the Gospel. The torture and abuse of women, not only in the villages but also in the cities of Asia, cannot be ignored. Tourism used for the exploitation of women and the flesh trade is a curse in some of our Asian countries. We must consider our missionary mandate in this context.

The presence of a large number of refugees in many countries is also a challenge. These refugees can be reached in the country of their refuge more easily than in the country of their birth. We were challenged in a new way at Lausanne II to consider the handicapped that number 513 million in our world. The religions and philosophies of Asia do not pay any attention to these except as objects of pity to whom alms may be given to earn merit for one's own salvation! It is

only the Christian Gospel which offers hope and new life to them.

II. The Confession

Our Lord was very particular that His disciples should confess who He was. He asked, "Who do you say I am?" (Matt.16:15). Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt.16:16). Only then did Jesus say that He would build His church. Simon Peter confessed that Jesus was the Lord (the Christ) and God, the same confession that Thomas made when he saw the risen Lord (John 20:28). This confession is important as we consider the building of the church of Jesus Christ in a pluralistic world. The battle for the uniqueness of the Christ as Saviour and Lord is a crucial battle for missions today. There can be no compromise in this.

An understanding of culture and identification with the culture of those among whom we serve is very necessary. Asians who come from a monocultural background where only one language is spoken may find it difficult to adjust to other cultures and learn other languages. That is why Asian missions were mono cultural missions and not cross-cultural missions for a long time. Our missionaries crossed the oceans to go to people of the same culture and language.

Also, we need to guard against becoming service agents of western missionary enterprises, adopting formulae and strategies churned out somewhere else without any reference to our cultural and social context. We need to be sensitive to the voice of the Holy Spirit and to our context. Nor should we blindly adopt pragmatic, manipulative management techniques which promise success without consideration of our own cultural values and ethnic temperaments.

With sensitivity to our own cultural and social context we should hold on to the uniqueness of the Person and the work of Christ as Saviour and Lord. Only on that solid foundation can the church be built.

III. The Conflict

In talking about building His church, Jesus referred to the "gates

of Hades” and indicated a conflict against them. The expression “gates of Hades” refers to the powers of Satan. This conflict with the supernatural powers of evil and the Evil One is real in missions and cannot be ignored. Missions is a spiritual conflict; it is not just a humanitarian effort or a sociological exercise. The opposition from Satan can come in the form of persecution and opposition by hostile people and authorities. It can also come in a subtle way through disunity, discouragement and physical disability.

Unwillingness to work together in a team and excessive individualism are some Asian characteristics which hinder the cause of missions. Satan uses these weaknesses to hinder the work.

The secret of victory is the authority which Christ gives us (Matt.16:19, 18:19). Ultimate victory is assured. “The gates of Hades will not overcome it” (Matt. 16:18).

IV. The Cost

Our mission is in the world but the world should not intrude into our mission. This note of warning was sounded at Lausanne II. The emphasis on success, numerical growth and achievement, without an equal emphasis on the place of servant-hood, sacrifice and suffering can lead to a distorted, triumphalistic picture of missions. The image of the missionary in the New Testament is not that of a smart manager or a conqueror, but that of a servant.

On the one side, the church in Asia should shed both its minority complex and its poverty complex. We should stop saying that we are a minority and are poor, and focus our attention on the task, trusting in God's resources. On the other hand we should avoid the superior attitude of the conqueror which characterized missions in the colonial period. Paternalism in missions is not just a Western pitfall. Asian missionaries can also fail in this, particularly if they come from a background of affluence and strength. Financial power and political power have nothing to do with missions in the spirit of Christ. It is only a mission that is characterized by **servant-hood**, **sacrifice** and **suffering** that will cause Asia to listen. Unfortunately the trend is to imitate the power and the lifestyle of Western missions. It is no

wonder that our enterprise is considered to be alien and strange in our countries.

Simon Peter could not stand it when Jesus was talking about His suffering and death. Jesus rebuked him and went on to say, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matt. 16:24). Jesus Himself had to shed His blood and lay down His life to build His church among every tribe, language, people and nation (Rev. 5:9, 10).

V. The Commitment

Not only did Jesus mention the cost, but He also pointed out the commitment needed when He was talking about building His church. "Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it." (Matt. 16:25). Missions is often taken lightly, like a hobby or a pastime.

There are some common maladies that plague Asian missions. We must seek to be delivered from these if we are to take world missions as a serious challenge. One malady is the lack of adequate communication between the mission and the missionary, and between the mission and the supporting church. One Asian missionary had to wait six months to receive a response to his letter from his mission. The lack of proper administrative structure, the lack of clearly defined objectives, the lack of accountability and proper pastoral care, reveal not only inexperience, but also a casual, amateurish approach to the most important enterprise in the world. Commitment is needed not only on the part of the missionary, but also on the part of the mission and its leaders.

Because of the abounding zeal of the churches and because of restrictions in entering countries as full-time missionaries, short-term missionaries are on the increase in the Asian scene. Short-term missionaries have their place, provided they do not become missionary tourists and picnickers. The short-term experience should lead them to a lifetime involvement in missions, either on the mission field or in their home country. Short-term missions with a lifetime commitment will be effective. Instead of the "let-me-try-it-and-see"

attitude, there must be a willingness to risk everything in a total abandonment to do God's will.

As Asian churches face the challenge of world missions, let there be a quality commitment, sensitivity to the needs and realities of the people, an utter dependence on the Lord, and a daring faith to blaze a new trail in the cause of missions. As we do that, our confidence should be in the sure victory of Christ and in the sure consummation of God's redemptive purpose (Rev. 11:15, 7:9, 10).

48. BRAZIL Moves Ahead!

Taken from Outreach November 1978

This is my first visit to Brazil and South America. From the hotel room where I am accommodated I can see the beautiful bay which separates the twin cities Rio de Janeiro and Niteroi. There is a bridge across the bay, 14 kilometers long. There are also ferry boats and fast moving hydrofoils to carry the thousands of people who travel back and forth across the bay. Ships move across the bay to anchor in Rio harbor. Beyond the bay one can see the vast Atlantic Ocean. All around the bay there are small hills and tall skyscrapers. At any time during the day, the beautiful sandy beaches are crowded with happy, pleasure-loving people. It looks as though life itself is just one long vacation for many of these people. They say that Rio has the longest and the best beach in the world and the next is our own Marina beach in Madras.

The People

The impression that I have of the people of Brazil is that they are a happy, easy going people, very warm and friendly. They greet you with a firm handshake and warm bear hug. One can see young people everywhere. It is said that 70% of the population consists of young people. The country is stable and economically prosperous. Huge department stores full of goods manufactured in the country and thousands of modern cars also made in the country are indications of a flourishing economy. The people are a great mixture. Fair-skinned, blond haired descendants of Western Europeans, dark haired descendants of Latins, dark skinned and short haired descendants of Africans and American Indians mix together very freely in this land which has been spared of racial tensions thus far. The commonly spoken Portuguese language is a uniting force.

There is a sizable population of Chinese, Japanese, Koreans and Arabs in the cities. German and Italian migrants have settled in the south. There are a few Indian engineers and technicians in Sao Paulo. Most of the people live along the highways while the vast land mass of the country is taken up with uninhabited jungles. In size Brazil is

the fifth largest country in the world and the largest in South America. Of a population of about 117 million people, about 100,000 are American Indians who live in the jungles of the Amazons.

® Rev. Theodore Williams, General Secretary of IEM went as a consultant of the Missions Commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship to the Seminar of Brazilian Missions held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from 3-5 October, '78.

The Church

The Roman Catholic Church is the largest church here as in the rest of Latin America. There are great changes taking place within this church. The Charismatic movement has affected the church. There is also a strong Marxist trend among the priests and leaders of the Catholic Church and they advocate the theology of liberation. The Charismatic movement has also touched the Baptists, Methodists and Presbyterians. The fast growing denominations are the Baptists and the Assemblies of God. The largest Baptist Church in Niteroi, Primeira Igreja Batista has about 3000 members and a Sunday school of about the same number. The church is packed in both the morning and evening services. It was my privilege to participate in these services. The pastor, Dr. Nilson Fanini is a well-known evangelical leader and is used very much in evangelistic crusades all over Brazil and Latin America. He has a television and radio ministry covering the entire country and reaching more than 8 million people.

The church has a very effective social concern programme. They adopt a poor family for six months and provide food and clothing and see to it that the working members get employment. There is an active counseling programme. There is also effective evangelistic outreach. Every evening the members of the church have an open air meeting near the ferry station where hundreds of people pass by. They report that in three months there were 1820 decisions for Christ.

The door is wide open in Brazil for the preaching of the Gospel. Billy Graham and Rex Humbard have had large crusades in the city of Rio. There are about 2900 Protestant missionaries in Brazil. In 1979

there will be a large gathering of young people called 'Generation '79' in Sao Paulo. About 10,000 young people are expected. Dr. Billy Graham will be the main speaker.

Missions

There are eight denominational Brazilian missions and seven interdenominational ones. Nearly 150 missionaries have gone so far to other countries of Latin America, North America, Portugal, France, South Africa and Israel. The Assemblies of God has sent 78 missionaries and the Brazilian Baptist Convention 51. Besides these nearly 365 Brazilian missionaries are working in the country in cross-cultural situations. On the Sunday morning when I was present in Dr. Fanini's Church, they had an offering of \$20,000 (about Rs. 160,000) for Home missions. Besides this, they also have a Foreign mission offering at another time of the year.

Brazil has the resources for missions in terms of men and money. But there are handicaps as in other developing countries. There are restrictions in sending money out of the country for the support of missionaries. Also, the church here faces the challenge of Marxism and Spiritism. Spiritism has many followers. Dr. Fanini said in his opening address in the Seminar, 'In twenty years Brazil may be either under evangelicalism or Spiritism.' Let us pray for Brazil and for our brothers and sisters in this land.

49. The Lord of Missions Marches on!

I. Around the World

Eighteen years back, returning back from the Berlin Congress on Evangelism, I had the option to go either to Israel or to Afghanistan. I chose Afghanistan because there was the possibility of IEM sending a medical person there. But last April the opportunity came to go to Israel. I was invited to minister the Word in a Conference for Jewish believers in the beautiful Beth Yedidia conference centre in Haifa. These Bible conferences are held during Jewish holidays several times in a year and are intended to nurture and disciple Jewish believers. These were the Passover holidays which coincided with Easter this year. The person who co-ordinates these conferences is Mr. Victor Smadja, a Jewish believer who lived formerly in Tunisia. He has a large printing press and publishing house in Jerusalem. He is also the leader of the Messianic Assemblies in Israel.

There are approximately 2000 Jewish believers in Israel. They prefer to call themselves "Messianic Jews" or "Jewish believers" rather than Christians and retain most of the Jewish practices and ways of life. Life is not easy for a Jewish believer in Israel. He is often discriminated against. If he is active in witnessing to fellow Jews, his property may be damaged, his mail tampered with and his life threatened. Orthodox Jews are constantly on the alert to attack any expression of active Christian witness. The law in Israel forbids open evangelism including distribution of tracts. A Christian friend who was talking to an enquirer in the bus-stand about Christ was intimidated by the police. In spite of this, conversions are taking place.

I was staying on the outskirts of Jerusalem overlooking Bethlehem in the home of a young couple, missionaries from the Antioch Mission in Brazil. They work among Spanish and Portuguese speaking Jews. When I was in their home, it was a thrill to see my Brazilian friend lead one of his contacts, a Jew from Argentina to the Lord and I heard since then that this man was baptized.

Several Jews are followers of Indian gurus. These gurus have

representatives in Israel. These devotees come to visit their ashrams in India. In Haifa there is a large Baha'i temple. All of this is an indication of the spiritual vacuum among the Jews in Israel. Only the Messiah can fill this void.

There were two hundred believers in the Conference in which I taught the Scriptures. Jewish believers do not have much contact with Christians and churches in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Most of their contacts are with the west. Unfortunately not all of these contacts with western Christianity are helpful. There are some from the west who have settled down in Israel as waiting spectators of end time events. Their influence does not foster healthy discipleship among the Jewish believers because they influence them to be preoccupied with prophecies concerning themselves rather than a lost world which needs Christ.

II. New Jersey, Boston

My next stop was New York, where a retreat was arranged for the Indian Christians in the New York - New Jersey area. The organizers of this gathering were Mr. T.M. John, Mr. Sammy Solanky and Mr. John Ebenezer, IEM friends and supporters. One hundred and five Indian Christians attended this retreat. There were Gujarathis, Kannadigas, Malayalis, Tamils, Telugus and Hindi speaking people. There were also a few Guyana Indians.

In Boston I was the Bible teacher in the annual missionary conferences of the Park Street Church. This was the 175th anniversary year and the 45th missionary conference of this historic church. Several things impressed me deeply about this church's missionary involvement. They do not take on missionaries only for a short period. I heard the testimonies of missionaries who are being supported faithfully and regularly for thirty five years. Some of them are being supported even after they have moved into ministries in the home country because of health reasons. What commitment and consistency! The involvement is also very personal. Each of the supported missionaries speaks of the church as their spiritual home though it was not their home church when the support started. There are prayer groups to pray for the missionaries serving in

particular regions of the world and in this way every supported missionary is regularly prayed for. Faith Promise giving is another special feature of the Church's missionary involvement.

Every year at the missionary conference, there is a forum on world missions dealing with missiological issues and practical missionary problems. Dr. Clyde Taylor, formerly with the National Association of Evangelicals and World Evangelical Fellowship and at present with the World Relief Commission has been leading these forums for the last 29 years!

III. El Salvador

Several friends who heard I was going to El Salvador expressed concern for my safety. This is typical of how the media influences our thinking about Central America. No one can deny the fighting, the violence and the uncertain future of the countries in this part of the world. But that is not the whole story. This is an area of the world where great things are happening today in church growth and missions. The church is growing at a faster pace here than anywhere else in the world. Going through the streets of San Salvador, the capital of El Salvador, no one can guess that there is an ugly civil war going on in the country. The people are happy, friendly and busy. Goods are available in plenty in the stores and life seems to be normal. I even saw a store with a signboard announcing that it would be open all night! Armed soldiers standing guard in strategic locations of the city were the only grim reminder that there was a war going on.

IV. Mission 84

Mission 84 was planned in San Salvador to challenge the churches of Central America about their missionary responsibility. The initiative was taken by Rev. Luis Bush, pastor of Iglesia Nazaret, a strong and active local church in San Salvador. The church and its elders hosted the Conference. Fifteen hundred pastors and young people came from Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Costa Rica, Panama and Honduras. Besides Bible studies and inspirational messages there was instruction on the theology of missions, history of missions and on topics such as the local church and missions, the

role of the pastor and models from emerging missions etc. I gave the bible studies in the mornings and the inspirational messages in the evenings. The response was very good. Two theological students from Costa Rica are determined to return to their country and motivate their churches for missions. A young Guatemalan engineer is committed to go to any Muslim country as a "tent maker." A young Mexican is greatly burdened to reach the Indian tribes in his country. These are just a few examples of the responses.

Iglesia Nazaret combined their annual missionary conference with Mission 84. Mission 84 was over on May 12, and the missionary conference of Iglesia Nazaret concluded on May 13, Sunday. I spoke 4 times that day. The Faith Promise giving on that day came to about colones (Salvadorian money) 144,000 or \$ 36,000 (Rupees 378,000). This is the same amount the church spends on its annual budget. There are three services held on Sunday mornings to accommodate all the people. I asked one of the elders why they did not extend the church building. He said that they decided not to spend their money on their own building programmes but to invest it on evangelism within the country and on world missions. What a church! Iglesia Nazaret and a few other local churches have jointly formed the Salvadorian Evangelical Mission in 1983 and this mission has sent two families to Spain. In all my contacts with the pastors and Christians in Salvador I did not notice any spirit of pessimism or despair wondering what was going to happen in the future but enthusiasm and hope mixed with a sense of urgency. Praise God for this.

V. Guatemala

From El Salvador I went Guatemala where it was my privilege to be a speaker in the first World Missions Conference at the Central American Theological Seminary in Guatemala City in May 1981. This conference was attended by pastors and lay leaders from several Central American countries. The missionary vision of Iglesia Nazaret and the formation of the Salvadorian Evangelical Mission were the outcome of this conference. They are planning the second World Missions Conference in July this year. A mini conference was held on May 14 and I spoke in the sessions. Five hundred pastors, laymen and seminary students gathered in the meetings. A nucleus of keen,

committed men from several local churches met together at lunch with a determination to form a missionary agency in Guatemala.

The fastest church growth in the world today is taking place in Guatemala. The church is growing at the rate of 12.5%. It is growing among the Indian tribes as well as among the middle and upper class people. Out of a population of eight million in Guatemala it is reported that 22% are evangelical Christians.

I came back from this visit with a gripping awareness that our Lord is at work in His world. The Lord of missions is marching on!

50. The World Evangelical Fellowship

The first ecumenical movement to bring God's people together was evangelical. It was the World Evangelical Alliance formed in Britain in 1846. It could not develop and grow as expected because of the two world wars and other situations. However, national evangelical movements became strong in Britain and other European countries. The annual Universal Week of prayer became a strong witness to evangelical unity. In 1951 the World Evangelical Alliance was revitalized with the new name World Evangelical Fellowship. It stood for **fellowship in the Gospel, the defense of the Gospel and advance of the Gospel**. The headquarters of WEF was in Europe and then in the United States of America. The early leaders were from North America and England.

I. Formation of commissions

From 1974 it became more functional with a vision to help the worldwide Church. This led to the formation of Commissions,

- a. The first one being the Theological Commission. Under the Theological Commission the International Council of Accrediting Agencies was set up to grant accreditation to Seminaries and Bible Schools through Regional Accrediting bodies in different parts of the world so that academic excellence can be maintained along with spiritual commitment. Consultations are held on current theological, ethical and socio-political issues to give expression to evangelical thinking on those issues. Publications of the Commission help evangelical fellowships and churches around the world to formulate their thinking on those issues.
- b. The Missions Commission formed in 1977 brings together representatives from National and Regional Missions Associations from different parts of the world. In the earlier years the activities of the Missions Commission focused on creating missions awareness and helping in the formation of Missions Associations in the Two thirds World. The focus on the past three years was on missionary training with the International Missionary Training Project and the formation of

the International Missionary Training Fellowship which is a network of Missionary Training Centres around the world. In the Consultation this year the focus was on Inter-dependent Partnerships in Missions. This consultation was held in Manila on 15-20 June. There were 87 delegates. Dr. Theodore Srinivasagam presented a paper in the Consultation.

- c. Besides these the WEF has a Commission on Church Renewal, a Commission on Women's Concerns and the newly formed Youth Commission and the Commission on Religious Liberty.
- d. The Interchurch Relief and Development Alliance, is an association of evangelical Relief and Development Agencies and is an affiliate of WEF.

Through its Commissions and member Organisations WEF enables local churches to fulfill their scriptural mandate to disciple the nations. This help is given through the national and regional evangelical fellowships and alliances. These national and regional evangelical fellowships are full members and associate membership is open to international evangelical Organizations, Denominations and Churches. At present there are 69 Full members and 88 Associate members representing more than 10 crore evangelical Christians.

II. WEF General Assembly

The WEF General Assembly is held every six years and the ninth one was held on 20-26 June in Manila. There were nearly 300 delegates from fifty nations. Among the highlights of the Assembly was the installation of Dr. Jun Vencer of Philippines as the new International Director succeeding Dr. David Howard. He is the first non westerner to be appointed to this position. The other event was the visit of the newly elected President of the Philippines, President Fidel Ramos. The Executive Council members gathered around him and Dr. Tokunboh Adeyemo from Africa, the Chairman of the Council offered prayer for him. The Spirit of the Lord was powerfully present on that occasion. Other occasions when we sensed the moving of the Spirit and the melting of hearts was when Mr. George Verwer of Operation Mobilization prayed in a morning session and Rev. Paul Negrut from Romania told us what God is doing in that country and then led in prayer. Dr. Ajith Fernando from Sri Lanka gave the

morning Bible Studies. I spoke in the closing Service of commitment ending in the Holy Communion.

It has been my privilege to be involved in the WEF from 1977, first as an Executive Committee member of the Missions Commission from its founding, then as its Executive Secretary from 1977 until 1986 and now as its Chairman from 1986. I have also served as President of the WEF from 1982. In the recent meetings, I was again appointed as the Chairman of the Missions Commission for 1992-95 and as president of WEF for 1992-96. Please pray for WEF, its leaders and its activities.

51. The Church in Ethiopia

This was my first visit to Ethiopia though I had passed through some years back. I was invited by the Mekane Yesus Seminary. The contact came through Rev. Per Helge Myren of the Norwegian Lutheran mission whom I met at the Conference in September 1988. I was happy to get this opportunity to minister to a church that has gone through much suppression and persecution. I gave lectures on Missions in the Seminary and spoke to the Christians in the evenings. I also had the opportunity to meet the President and other leaders of the Mekane Yesus Church.

I. Denominations and History

The predominant church in Ethiopia is the Orthodox Church which regarded the Emperor very highly. Next to the Orthodox Church is the Mekane Yesus church which was founded through the work of Lutheran missionaries from Germany, Norway and Sweden. They have about 8,00,000 members. Almost equal in number is the church founded by the Sudan Interior Mission. There are also Baptists, Anglicans and Mennonites. The Presbyterians have joined the Mekane Yesus Church. Mekane Yesus Church was started in 1956. After the communist take-over in 1974 it went through much persecution. The former General Secretary was imprisoned and released. Later he was kidnapped and disappeared from the scene. It is believed that he was murdered. His wife was also in jail until September 1989. The eight storey building with the Church offices in Addis Ababa was taken over suddenly by the Government. Many of its pastors were imprisoned. But now with the changing situation in Eastern Europe, things have eased up in Ethiopia also. There is no one in prison. On the other hand the Government is wooing the churches. This church is evangelical in doctrine and wants to identify very closely with the Evangelical Movement. There is a small Evangelical Fellowship in Ethiopia.

The Mekane Yesus church is strong in the South and West. This is the fastest growing church in the world. Fifty thousand people were added to the church in 1988 and 40,000 in 1989. There is a revival going on. There are converts from Islam also, particularly in the South

and in Addis Ababa. The new believers need more Bible teachers. They have only 250 pastors and 400 evangelists. These are bare-boned evangelists who are taught just enough so that they can teach others. For example, one woman who does not know how to read was taught through pictures and now she goes around teaching others with those pictures. There are 24 Bible schools to train the evangelists. There are two seminaries, one in the west and one in Addis Ababa. They have 800 preaching places. There is also the Roman Catholic Church in Ethiopia. The Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church and the Mekane Yesus Church form a relief and development agency which is accepted by the Government.

II. Political and Social Situation

After the communist take-over the country has certainly gone down economically. It was very difficult to find basic commodities, the shops are empty. This is a totally different picture from what Ethiopia was before 1974. Under Emperor Haile Selassie the country prospered with much foreign aid and investment. The political situation now is uncertain. Last May there was an attempted coup. Anything can happen even now. There is a strong rumour that they will go in for a multi party system.

There were hundreds of teachers from South India serving in Ethiopia before the communist take-over. There are still a few left and they are counting the days to leave the country.

III. The spread of Islam

After the communist take-over the monopoly of the Orthodox Church was broken. Equal status was given to all religions. Islam took advantage of this freedom and began to spread. In the last 15 years, 100 mosques were built in Ethiopia, 100 of them in Addis Ababa. Islam is spread through voluntary teachers. There are 4 Muslim universities in Egypt. Financial help is given to people so they can become Muslims. They are encouraged to go on Haj to Mecca and come back with a lot of money. Conversions to Islam take place also through marriages.

The Church in Ethiopia needs the prayer support and

encouragement of the worldwide church. The great need is for trained pastors and Bible teachers. They need to upgrade their seminaries by training their staff and developing their library.

The people of Ethiopia are a people of an ancient culture and heritage. There are many similarities between their customs and Jewish customs. They trace their ancestry to the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon. Christianity came here through the Ethiopian eunuch mentioned in Acts 8.

In this land of change we trust and pray that the changes in the coming years will be for the better and for the building up of the Church of Jesus Christ.

52. A Look at the Church in Hungary Today

Taken from Outreach April 1990

I was delighted to be in Hungary at the invitation of the Evangelical Alliance of Hungary from 7 January to 14 January. The occasion was the observance of the Alliance Week of Prayer. The Evangelical Alliance Week of Prayer was observed from 7 January to 14 January and the Ecumenical Week of Prayer was observed from 14 January to 21 January. Dr. Emilio Castro came to Budapest for the opening of the Ecumenical Week of Prayer.

On arrival in Hungary I was received in the VIP lounge because the President of the Evangelical Alliance is Dr. Janos Viczian who is a member of the present parliament. In the Interim Parliament they have representatives from the Roman Catholic Church, Lutheran Church, Reformed Church and the Council of Free Churches under whose umbrella the Evangelical Alliance functions.

The Alliance had arranged an excellent programme for me. One Sunday morning I spoke in a Methodist Church and the other Sunday morning in a Baptist Church. During the week I spoke in five Baptist Churches, two Pentecostal Churches and one Brethren Assembly. These are the groups which constitute the Evangelical Alliance.

1. Denominations

Hungary has a population of 10 million people. The majority of Christians are Roman Catholics with 13 Bishops. Next comes the Reformed Church with a membership of 2 million with 4 Bishops. The Lutheran Church is the third with a membership of half a million with 2 Bishops. The Baptists have 20,000 members, the Pentecostals 5,000 members and the Methodists 1,500 members. The president of the Baptist Alliance is Dr. Janos Viczian who is also the President of the Evangelical Alliance. The Secretary of the Alliance is Dr. Frigyes Hecker who is the District Superintendent of the Methodist Church. The Baptists have a Seminary in Budapest. The Seminary functioned even during the Communist regime. The Christians and the Church leaders often refer to the forty years of bondage. Comparatively the Church in Hungary has not been suppressed as the Church in other

East European countries. The Baptist Seminary property was taken by the government and 70% of the Methodist headquarters building was also taken. There has been some interference in the work of the Church with a few pastors put in prison for resisting the Government's attempt to take over the property.

II. Government support

During my stay in Hungary the Evangelical Alliance leaders arranged for me to meet with the Chairman of the Religious Department in the Ministry of Cultural Affairs. We had a very good time with him. He was accompanied by two of his assistants, one a woman in charge of smaller denominations and the other a man in charge of all schools. The Chairman said that they would give all the encouragement and freedom to the churches to carry on their ministry. They were going to give scholarships for theological students in the university also financial help for the churches to run their homes for the aged and the handicapped. He said the Government would help in putting up new Church buildings and also help the Churches to preserve the archives and historical and cultural heritage. He said this was ignored during the forty years. The Deputy said that the Churches should help the country by teaching moral values and standards because of the influx of harmful influence into the country. He referred particularly to the increase of red light areas and pornography in the country.

III. Help for Romanians

I also met the Lutheran Bishop who is the President of the Ecumenical Movement in Hungary. He was very cordial and mentioned the good relationship he had with the Evangelical Alliance. He talked about the help given by the Hungarian Church to the Romanians in their need. I heard that the churches in one city in Hungary contributed 250,000 Forints (an equivalent of \$ 4167). In terms of dollars this may not seem to be much. But for the Hungarian Christians this was quite a big amount. The Baptist Church in this city gave 75,000 Forints (\$ 1250). There is a great deal of sympathy and concern for the plight of the Romanians and particularly for the Romanian Christians.

IV. Evangelical alliance

I met with the Council of the Evangelical Alliance on 11 January, they had their meeting at that time. The Evangelical Alliance in Hungary was started in 1936. It seems that the Alliance Week of Prayer was started in 1886. Among the first honorary Presidents of the Alliance were the President of the National Bank and the Minister of Culture. The President of the Baptist Union was the General Secretary. During the forties the Alliance was very weak and did not observe the Week of Prayer.

In 1984 the Alliance Committee was formed and it was allowed to function under the umbrella of the Council of Free Churches. At this time they established links with the European Evangelical Alliance and the World Evangelical Fellowship. The Council of Free Churches was dissolved in December 1989, and so the Evangelical Alliance should be registered as a separate body. They have appointed a committee to prepare the by-laws for this.

It was interesting to see a leader of the Salvation Army in that meeting. The Salvation Army began its work in Hungary in 1924 and was dissolved in 1944 by Hitler. Again they have revived it and want to be linked with the Evangelical Alliance.

V. Freedom for churches

The new freedom for the Churches is seen in the permission they had received to put up new buildings. The Baptist Seminary with 35 students is putting up a new building. The Brethren have built a new four storey building at the centre of Budapest. The meeting hall can accommodate about 600 people. The Methodists have a new site assigned to them in old Budapest and hope to put up a building for a Church and offices.

One of the services in which I spoke was at Pecs, 200 Kms from Budapest close to the Yugoslavian border and another service at Miskolc close to the border of Czechoslovakia.

I came away greatly burdened for Hungary and for the future of the churches there. On 23 January the Parliament will take up the

new law of Religion guaranteeing freedom. They will have their elections in March. With the coming of freedom there are also some grave dangers. The best thing for Hungary would be to maintain its own distinctness. Just as harmful as the influence from the East was, so will also be the influence from the West. Hungary is now open for new religious movements and cults as well as the moral permissiveness from the West. We need to pray that the Church will be prepared for this.

It was my privilege to be the first visitor from the WEF to Hungary. I would request you to pray for the leaders of the Evangelical Alliance as they face the transition in the life of the Church and the country.

53. COMIBAM 87

Taken from Outreach January, 1988

The name sounds like a bomb and that is what it happened to be! A bomb, an explosion in the history of the Church in Latin America and in the history of worldwide missions! COMIBAM is the acronym standing for Congress on Missions for Ibero America. Ibero America includes all the Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries of Central and South America and the countries of the Iberian Peninsula, Spain and Portugal. This was the first continent wide Ibero American conference on missions held in Latin America marking "the change in Latin America's evangelicals from a mission field to a mission force."

The venue was the large Anhembi Convention Centre in Sao Paulo, Brazil. From November 23 through 27, 1987, 3200 men and women from Latin America and around the world mingled with each other, shaking hands warmly with the Latin American hug, sharing and praying together in their common concern to reach the world for Christ. The Convention auditorium was the scene of Spirit filled worship, fervent intercession and thundering challenges and it became an altar of consecration to many. What an experience!

I. The Composition

COMIBAM drew 2863 participants from Ibero America and 353 observers from others parts of the world. Observers came from Africa, Asia, Europe, North America and Oceania. Among the participants were two from Cuba and twenty-four from Nicaragua. Observers included those who came from Angola and Mozambique.

Spanish and Portuguese were the major languages of the congress. There was simultaneous interpretation into English. Among the evening plenary speakers, I was the only English speaker. But several seminars were led by English speakers with the help of interpreters.

Fifty percent of the participants were Pastors and Church leaders. One of the main objectives of the congress was to bring missionary

vision to the local churches. One third were young people and ten percent women. It was required that the participants must be dedicated to the Lord and His work, must have a valid ministry in the local church and be recommended by a leader in their local church.

II. The Content

The effectiveness of a Congress on missions should be evaluated not by the number of people who attended or by the famous speakers who spoke but by the content, the objectives and the approach. In all these COMIBAM 87 excelled.

1. A Process

It was repeatedly emphasized that COMIBAM is a process more than just an event. This process was seen in the development of the vision. Rev. Luish Bush was the President and General Coordinator of COMIBAM and Rev Jonathan Dos Santos, the Vice President of COMIBAM. It was my privilege to be closely associated with both these brothers through the Missions Commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship. I met Brother Jonathan first in a consultation of Brazilian missions in Rio de Janeiro in 1978. In May 1981, a conference on World Missions was organized by the Central American Theological Seminary in Guatemala City and it was my privilege to be one of the main speakers in this conference. Many pastors from Central America came to this conference. Among them was Brother Luish Bush who was then the pastor of Iglesia Nazaret in El Salvador. He was deeply stirred in the conference and later he organized a world missions conference with the help of his church Nazaret. In the Wheaton 83 Conference Rev Luish Bush and Rev Jonathan Dos Santos talked about a continent-wide conference on mission in Latin America. This was the beginning of the process.

Over a period of two years beginning from 1985 national missions conferences and consultations were held in several countries in Ibero America involving church leaders, pastors and young people. Those who came to COMIBAM were already motivated for missions and they came with an expectation to hear God speak so that they could launch out into obedient action. In this COMIBAM was different from other international conferences on World evangelization.

The process will continue. One of the guidelines of the Congress states "It is the purpose of this Congress to initiate a process of increasing the interest and motivation of the Latin churches towards missions activity which will have a continuing effect and impact far beyond the event of the Congress itself."

2. Sharply defined focus

Latin America is the birthplace of liberation theology. Yet that was not the point of focus in this Congress. Nor were issues of social concern and peace or justice allowed to dominate the Congress as in other international conferences. It is not because the planners and participants were uninterested or uninvolved in those issues. A strong concern for the urban poor and for the oppressed and exploited peoples of the world was predominant in the Congress and discussions. But the main focus was on cross cultural missions and in reaching the unreached peoples with the Gospel of Christ. When this sharp focus is not maintained, the casualty is often the concern for the salvation of the lost unreached peoples.

An Ibero American consultation was held earlier to define the key words and terms relating to missions and this has provided the missiology for COMIBAM. Missions was defined sharply in terms of world evangelization and cross cultural missions. The theme of the conference was "Light to the Nations" (Isaiah 49:6). There were nine plenary sessions, eighty workshops, nine affinity groups and two national consultations. The work shops were of a practical nature dealing with financial support of missionaries, training of missionaries, mobilizing local churches etc.

3. Togetherness in missions

Another special emphasis in the Congress was the togetherness of God's people in missions. Cultural and linguistic barriers were overcome when Spanish speaking Christians and Portuguese speaking Christians sought to face the challenge of missions.

The Congress emphasized full evangelical participation encouraging broad based co-operation and representation across the spectrum of evangelical churches, denominations, mission

agencies and associations in fulfilling its objectives. Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal denominations came together for the first time in some countries

The barriers between expatriate missionaries and national Christians were broken. In the opening session of the Congress warm tributes were paid to expatriate missionaries who brought the Gospel to Latin America. Those who were now serving in Latin America and were present at the Congress were given a standing ovation. The participation of churches and Christians from all parts of the world in the cause of missions was recognized and the partnership of Ibero American churches with them was emphasized.

III. The challenge

The Congress ended with a missions festival on Saturday, November 28 at the Iberapura stadium. About 3000 people including many Brazilian Christians were present. The main messages were given by Rev. Luis Palau, an Argentinean evangelist and Rev. Caio Fabio, a Brazilian evangelist. Several hundreds responded in total consecration of their lives for the cause of missions.

The challenge of the Muslim world and of post Christian Europe came through very strongly in the Congress and many participants responded to these challenges.

A continuing committee was formed to carry on the follow up of the Congress. Two co-ordinators were appointed for this purpose- Rev. Al Hatch in Ecuador and Ave Alexander Araujo in Brazil. COMIBAM as a Missions Congress is now history but COMIBAM (Co-operation on Missions for Ibero America) as a continuing channel of missions challenge, involvement and action for the Ibero American Churches will continue.

54. Emerging Missions

One of the significant facts in the history of missions is the emergence of the new missionary movements in Asia, Africa and Latin America in our time. With the mushrooming of these movements in recent times, there is an immediate and urgent need to locate them and to bring them in touch with each other. This can be the work of the Associations of Missions, where they exist, but in countries where there are no such Associations the Missions Commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship can help. The discovering and identifying of these missions is not easy often because of an aversion which some organizations have to publicity, and a general indifference on the part of others to join together with those of the same burden and vision.

1. The Patterns Observed

In our consideration of emerging missions first of all, there are the patterns observed. Here I have to limit myself to the geographical regions of which I am best acquainted. Korea in Asia and Brazil in Latin America are known for their missionary awakening. There are two common factors one can observe in these two countries. One is the existence of a virile, growing church and the other is the growth of a strong economy. When the Holy Spirit is at work in the church, missions is the natural outcome. The growth of the church in Korea and Brazil is phenomenal. There are also the evidences of the work of the Spirit in the churches as seen from the well attended early Morning Prayer meetings especially in Korea. Other countries also are experiencing a missionary awakening. The recent Indonesian revival has led to missionary concern in the country. The evidence of missionary interest in South India and North East India are the result of the moving of the Spirit in those regions.

2. Recruitment

The general pattern in recruitment is on an individual and voluntary basis. In missionary conventions and meetings young people are challenged to heed the missionary call. Missionaries are brought into contact with potential supporters and candidates. Except in a few cases, recruitment from local

churches is not common. Most of the candidates apply on their own to missionary societies. The local church plays very little part in the recruitment. Seminaries also play very little part in the recruitment of missionaries. On the other hand, small Bible schools which do not claim academic excellence seem to be the source of inspiration and challenge of missionary candidates.

2. Training

This is an area where emerging missions need long range planning and action. At present various training programmes are used. Some use existing Bible schools. Others have set up their own training institutes which are not much different from Bible schools. The East West Centre in Korea and the Indian Missionary Training Institute in India are examples of partnership in missionary training between emerging missions and western missions. The Indian Missionary Training Institute is used by more than one Indian mission. In countries like Brazil and India the task of translating the Scriptures into the various tribal dialects can only be the responsibility of indigenous missions as others are not permitted to enter the country for this work. But opportunities for training are sadly lacking in the field of linguistics, literacy etc.

Western mission leaders and missiologists who are very keen to train missionaries for the emerging missions should avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts and dissipation of resources. They would do well to enter into cooperative efforts with the indigenous missions encouraging and strengthening training programmes that exist already. Unfortunately, there is often more zeal to train people in a particular school of missiological thought and philosophy than to intelligently assess the need and meet it. The training of armchair missiologists who do not have missionary involvement at grassroots level in their own countries is not helping the cause of missions.

3. Support

Financial support for the work comes through individuals, local churches and prayer bands. Some missions are strictly indigenous with all their support coming from within the country while others

are partly supported by overseas funds. Fund raising methods vary from country to country. Personalized support is common. A prayer band or a local church takes care of the support of a missionary family. I know a local church in South India which supports six missionaries in four missions. Missionaries are not expected to raise their own support. Most of the Indian missions are averse to high-powered business tactics in fund raising.

There are government restrictions in sending money out of the country in many developing countries. This is a hurdle many emerging missions have to overcome. Indian missionaries serving outside India work as school teachers or medical workers and earn their support. Attempts are also made to raise their support from overseas Indian Christian communities. In Brazil each Brazilian is permitted to send abroad a certain amount. Several voluntary donors are mobilized to stand behind the missionaries who go out of the country. The Indonesian Missionary Fellowship works in fellowship with the Worldwide Evangelization Crusade, an international mission. Their missionaries are supported from the common pool of the Worldwide Evangelization Crusade and the Indonesian Missionary Fellowship.

4. Management

In most cases missionaries are directly responsible to their mission headquarters. But in some cases they are seconded to other missions or natural churches and in such cases they are under the direction and supervision of the groups with which they work. Generally speaking, management of missionaries in terms of planning, goal-setting and evaluation can be greatly improved. The administration is very poor in many emerging missions. Perhaps the lack of trained and experienced personnel in administration is a cause for this. In some cases the missions are too small to afford the services of a full-time administrator. In the area of management and planning emerging missions can accept and make use of the training and experience of missionary leaders from the older missions to train their own leaders.

The number of drop-outs is rather high in the case of missionaries

of emerging missions. A Korean mission executive lamented over the lack of perseverance and 'stickability' in the case of his missionaries. One reason for this is the lack of adequate pastoral care. Personal contacts between the mission executives and the missionaries are not adequate.

Emerging missions have accepted established patterns and modes set by older missions in many things such as recruitment, support etc. This need not be so. They can initiate and develop new approaches and methods. In matters such as training, financing and the lifestyle of the missionary on the field, emerging missions need not accept the established patterns of western missions. They can should blaze their own trails and come forth with new approaches.

II. The problems faced

1. Nominal Christianity

The emerging missionary movement in Asia, Latin America and Africa is youthful and enthusiastic. But it faces a few problems. Compared to the size of the Christian population those who are awakened to their missionary responsibility are very few. The uninformed, uninstructed and the uninvolved in the churches are a sizable number. Consistent missionary education of local congregations is a great need. The mobilization of the Christians for missions is a great challenge to be faced. Unfortunately the initiative for this does not come from denominations and local churches. It has to come from Para church missionary agencies which are often viewed with aloofness and suspicion by the churches. The initiative and the mission for missions is found largely in Para church agencies in Asia while the large denominations are plagued with nominalism and liberalism.

2. Fragmentation

The mushrooming missionary movements in Asia suffer much from disunity and fragmentation. In some cases local churches have become missionary sending bodies without proper administrative machinery. As a result, there is no proper

management or pastoral care of missionaries. There is no adequate attention given to training. If some of these smaller missions merge together there may be more efficiency and better administration. Even where merger is not possible, there can be cooperation and mutual sharing of resources and know-how through an Association of missions. But getting the missions together in an Association is not an easy task in some countries.

3. Identity

The identity of the missionary is another problem for emerging missions. I have already pointed this out in the Bombay Consultation. Asian missionaries have gone from their country to work with the national church in another country. Some have joined international missions which had their origin in the west and have broadened their borders to include missionaries of all nationalities and races. Others have gone on their own and are working on their own. In countries where there has already been the western missionary presence, a missionary pattern and lifestyle has been established. The Asian or the African missionary is expected to fit into this pattern by his western colleagues, by the national Christians and by the people of the country. The only alternative is to blaze a new trail and establish another pattern. This is not easy. So the missionary has to go through an identity crisis. Very often from his own culture he has to adapt himself to the missionary culture that already exists in the country of his labours and then he has to further adapt himself to the culture of that country.

4. Finance

Finding support for missionaries who go out of the country is not easy in countries like India. Often the standard of living in the country to which the missionary goes is higher than that of his own country. So he has to be paid three or four times more than what a Christian worker would be paid in his own country. Then there is the problem of sending financial support out of the country due to government restrictions on foreign exchange. It is utterly impossible to support any missionaries

from such countries to work in other lands. Does this mean that the Great Commission does not apply to the Christians in such lands? Or is there something else that God wants us to discover? Paul and Barnabas were sent by the church in Antioch though they did not belong to that church originally. Is there something we can learn from this?

5. Overseas pressures

Emerging missions have caught the attention of many missiologists and missionary organizations in the West. There are many attempts to export missionary training programmes and strategies and patterns from the west into those countries where the emerging missions are just making a start and are therefore young and inexperienced. The danger is that of imposing moulds and patterns that might have worked elsewhere on these younger missions without giving them an opportunity to discover the patterns that God has for them.

III. The Plan Suggested

1. Total mobilization

There is a worldwide church existing today and this church is awakening to its responsibility of world evangelization. Missions need not flow only from the west to the east any more. There are no more sending churches or receiving churches. The Church worldwide must be involved in world missions. Any unreached area must become the concern of the church worldwide. All the available resources in terms of personnel and funds must be mobilized and used to meet this need irrespective of the region or nationality. Because of political alignments certain parts of the world are open to certain nationalities while they are closed to others. For instance, many Arab countries and East European countries are easily accessible to Indian missionaries while certain other areas are more accessible to Chinese missionaries. Some African countries are more open to Chinese missionaries than to American missionaries. We have to take into account this political climate and plan our missionary strategy accordingly. Just because western

missionaries cannot go into certain countries, should these countries be given up for missionary involvement by western churches? Would they be willing to encourage and support those who can go to these countries though they may come from other parts of the world?

3. Partnership without paternalism

Missions can take the pattern and the form native to each country from where they originate. Insights, methods and patterns should be encouraged and developed as the Holy Spirit inspires the Christians in each country. A subtle paternalism which makes a mould of one's own philosophy and strategy of missions and passes it on to others should be avoided.

The ethos of training and strategy native to each country can be developed only by people of that country. When they call for help, such help must be given without stifling the indigenous initiatives and insights. Such help will be needed as western missions with their experience have much to offer to emerging missions. Using the advantage of money power and manpower, western missionary organizations should not impose on emerging missions their school of thought, strategy or programme. Partnership without paternalism is what is called for.

The church universal need not approach the challenge of world missions with just one pattern or mould. Let a thousand flowers bloom in the garden of missions under the refreshing dew of the Holy Spirit.

The emerging missions must take time to wait on the Lord and with sensitivity to the challenge of our times and the leading of the Spirit evolve their own plans and strategies for fulfilling the Great Commission. They do not have to look to Geneva or California or Wheaton to lead the way. Nor should they function as mere service agencies for western missionary agencies.

3. Sharing of resources

A pooling or sharing of resources of personnel, finance and equipment for the sole purpose of reaching the unreached will glorify the Lord of the Harvest and of the Church. This will mean dying to the identity of our organizations and to our narrow loyalties. But such a step will make available greater resources for world evangelization. Can any price be too great for this?

As we meet and pray and share our ideas together, may the Lord of the Harvest and of the Church give us a clear vision of our times, guide us into His plans and purposes and unite us for the common task ahead of us.

55. THE CHURCH LIVES!

Taken from OUTREACH November, 1984

Evangelical Alliance Conference

It was the eighty-ninth conference of the Evangelical Alliance of the German Democratic Republic (East Germany). Attending this conference along with the German delegates were three official visitors from Czechoslovakia (one was the Bishop of the Hernhut Brethren Church) and three representatives of the Council of Free Churches in Hungary (A Baptist who is the General Secretary of the Council, a Methodist and a member of the Open Brethren). There were others from Hungary and Romania who had come to GDR on holiday, as well as four African delegates from Zambia and Tanzania. Mr. John Richard and I were the first Indians ever to attend this conference of the Evangelical Alliance of GDR.

The conference was held in the beautiful town of Bad Blankenburg. Between three and four thousand delegates, mostly young people attended the conference. As accommodation was limited, most of the delegates had to sleep in tents. This is one reason why many older people did not attend as residential delegates. In former years they had been able to use the public facilities in the town but this was not the case this time.

The Mayor of Bad Blankenburg was present in the opening meeting along with the Secretary of Church Affairs. The Mayor brought greetings and one evening he held a reception in the Town Hall for the foreign visitors to the conference. Chapters 1-11 from the Gospel of John were chosen as the Scripture for the Conference. Every day the programme started with a prayer meeting at 8.30 followed by a morning meeting in which two Bible expositions were given on the conference Scripture passage. There was another Bible exposition in the afternoon followed by greetings and talks by the foreign visitors. Then in the night there was an evangelistic meeting with the message based on the conference Scripture passage. There were selected counselors available to counsel the many young people who came forward after the evening meetings.

I spoke in the evening meeting and in the closing meeting. The Evangelical Alliance of GDR and the Council of Free Churches of Hungary are the only two members of the European Evangelical Alliance from the Socialist countries. The Evangelical Alliance of the GDR is one of the strongest evangelical alliances in the world. They are able to draw in evangelicals from the Lutheran Church and the Free churches. A Bishop of the Lutheran Church gave the Bible exposition one evening.

Religious Liberty

The conditions of religious freedom and the activities of churches and Christians vary from country to country in Eastern Europe. Churches in Hungary and GDR seem to have more freedom than those in other countries. In Bulgaria the situation is difficult. In Czechoslovakia the State appoints the pastors and pays them. The leaders of the denominations have to be approved by the State after the denominational bodies select them. Visitors from outside are not allowed preaching in the churches. They can only give greetings. (One visitor gave 7 minutes greetings twenty- five times during his visit!) In Romania also there are many restrictions. It is not easy for Christians from one country to visit other East European countries.

Sometimes it is easier for them to visit Western countries than the Socialist countries. In Albania, It is a crime to profess to be a Christian. In all these Socialist countries it is not possible for Christians to work in government or be active in politics. In some countries they cannot study in the universities.

It is not possible to get religious statistics in any of the Eastern European countries. They are not recognized or maintained.

It was my privilege to visit Wittenberg the scene of Martin Luther's work and see the house in which he lived and the castle church and the city church which were associated with the Reformation. I was greatly moved to pray that the Lord would use me in building His Church in my time. It was thrilling to see the ancient palaces and churches in East Berlin associated with the German

emperors. Of course, one cannot miss the Berlin wall which stands as a monument of man's fear and suspicion of fellow men.

Church Alive!

I was deeply impressed with the fact that the Church is alive in East Germany. Since returning from there, I received a letter from a teenager in school saying that he opened his heart and became a Christian in the conference in Bad Blankenburg. He said that it was not easy for him to be a Christian among his fellow students and teachers who are atheists.

A theologian and church leader who has two doctorates from a West German university said that he and his family moved into East Germany to serve Christ and His church in the 1950s because many pastors and church leaders were fleeing to the West causing a great lack of ministers and Christian workers in the east. I asked him if he had any regrets for doing so. He said, "I sometimes feel that my children could have had more opportunities in the west." Another evangelical leader and his wife also moved into East Germany at the same time for the same reason. Then the curtain came down strongly in 1961. Now his wife is allowed to visit her aged mother in West Germany only for six days in a year. When her father and brother died she could not go. Let us thank God for these and many others who are paying a price for their obedience to Christ unknown and unsung by the outside world.

The Church in East Germany lives!

XII. Missions and IEM

56. IEM and the Church

Taken from Outreach, January, 2007

Handing Over Churches

*(Contrary to the common understanding, the Indian Evangelical Mission is not a church or a denomination. On the other hand, it is an arm of the church and functions with the prayer and financial backing of the church. What happens to the churches that are formed as a result of our missionaries' ministry? To find out, we asked our Founder and first General Secretary, **Rev. Dr. Theodore Williams** to share with us his insights on this important aspect of our ministry.)*

Our main concern when IEM was started was to take the Gospel to those who have never heard it with the prayer and the financial support of believers in our country. So we talked about the unreached tribal groups and people groups in the remote areas and challenged the believers to do all they could to help us in this task. We had just two areas of work, promotional work and the field work. Then, when converts began to come in and we baptized the believers in our mission fields, we formed them into worshipping groups to whom our missionaries ministered. The question came, "Who will baptize them? Who will give them Holy Communion?" We tried to solve these problems by using the services of our own leaders or missionaries from other fields who are ordained or by inviting ordained ministers from our supporters.

I. Not a Substitute for Church

The Holy Spirit began to lay it upon our hearts that IEM should not take the place of the Church, it is only a Task Force, and the Church is the main body. IEM is only scaffolding, the Church is the main building. Our main task is to build the Church. All these truths came to us from the Scriptures through the Holy Spirit. Our Lord said, "I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18). In Revelation 5:9-10 we read, "You were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God." Note the words

"a kingdom", "priests "and not just saved individuals. The apostle Paul, the great missionary and Church planter wrote, "God's intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms" (Ephesians 3:10). In those remote unreached regions it is through the Church, however small and weak it may be that God's manifold wisdom is demonstrated to Satan and his hosts. He challenges the devil through His Church, however small and weak it may appear to be.

II. Ministry to the Churches

Having understood these truths, we realized that our calling is to build the Church of Jesus Christ not only in places where it does not exist but also in places where it exists and needs up building and nourishing. That is why we changed the name of the department to Church Ministries department from Promotional department. We do not consider the churches merely as milking cows from which we draw funds and personnel but as objects of our love and loyalty and concern and we have to build them up. Sometimes, though much money may not come in through our conventions and teaching efforts, we shall be satisfied if the Church has been taught, edified and built up. That is why we do not depend on tear jerking stories and startling statistics but the sound teaching of the Word of God to create missionary vision and concern in the churches.

What about the congregations of the newly baptized believers in our mission fields?

III. Alongside the Church

We did not want to form an IEM Church or Denomination. Our decision was to affiliate them with the evangelical, Bible believing churches in the area. Our commitment is not to any denomination. This has some problems. One, the denomination or the Church to which we affiliate our congregations may not have enough workers to provide pastoral care for them. So we request them to ordain our missionaries and recognize them as belonging to their diocese or conference and they will continue to take care of our congregations. The property of the congregation should be brought under the

management of the body to which it is affiliated. A percentage of the income should be given to the body while the local congregation manages its own funds and takes care of its own expenses. The pastoral support is taken care of by the IEM as long as he is an IEM missionary. A member of the congregation must be trained and given the pastoral responsibility as soon as possible. His support must be taken care of by the congregation.

IV. Integrating with the Established Church

If there is no denomination in the area to which the congregation can be affiliated, we can form an Association of the Churches in the area. Each congregation can be autonomous for their programmes and finances but the property should be under the management of the Association. To allow our congregations to exist and function merely as autonomous churches has some dangers. An individual or a group of individuals may take control and this may lead to misuse of the money and the property and also lead to doctrinal deviations and heresies. Central control like that of a diocese or an Association is a safeguard against these dangers.

In all these structures, there must be openness and flexibility to the leading of the Holy Spirit. There must be continuous communication and fellowship between the IEM and the Denomination to which we have affiliated our congregations. We do not wash our hands off. As we are fallible human beings, still learning, there is scope for change and improvement.

57. Partners in Missions

During the desert war against Saddam Hussain I read that one of the reasons for Saddam's defeat was that the allied forces succeeded in cutting off his supply lines. I was struck by that piece of information and immediately realized how important the supply lines are for our missionary forces on the front line. We talk about the supporters and the supported, the sponsors and the sponsored, the goers and the senders and the donors and recipients in missionary circles. It is biblical and challenging to talk about Partners in Missions. Both the supporters and the supported are indeed partners. This gives the correct biblical picture of missionary involvement.

I. The Biblical Concept

The apostle Paul was great in introducing and emphasizing this concept of partnership in missions. He was not an individualist strategizing and doing exploits in missions on his own. He drew in other Christians and churches as partners with himself.

Paul and Barnabas were sent by the Church in Antioch as missionaries. We do not know whether they supported them financially but certainly they prayed for them. They did not control their programme or plan of work. Acts 14:26-28 says, "They sailed back to Antioch where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed. On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. And they stayed there a long time with the disciples." The church which sent the missionaries did not act like employers and bosses. Nor did the missionaries treat the church like second-class citizens in the Kingdom of God. They were partners in the Gospel. In this mutuality there was accountability. The missionaries reported to the sending body. The sending body benefitted from the ministry of the missionaries as they stayed with them a long time. Also, they must have ministered to the missionaries providing the physical and spiritual refreshing they needed.

The Church at Philippi was founded by Paul and they became his

partners in the Gospel (Philippians 1:5). They prayed for him (1:19), shared in his troubles (4:14) and shared their resources with him in his need (4:15-18). On his part he prayed for them (1:4) and ministered to them through his letter.

The Church at Rome was not founded by Paul and yet he sought their partnership in his mission to Spain (Romans 15:24). Before they could assist him he wanted to visit them and minister to them (1:11-13). He ministered to them through his letter also.

From the above passages and examples we note some principles of partnership between Paul and his supporting groups.

1. He solicited and accepted the prayer support and financial support of the churches.
2. He was not merely at the receiving end. He prayed for them and ministered to them through his visits and letters.
3. He fulfilled his accountability to them by reporting to them and writing to them.
4. There was a wholesome dignity and equality in this relationship. There was no donor-recipient complex!

II. The Supporting Group

As we consider the whole programme of missions as a partnership between the supporting group and the missionary, we take note of certain biblical principles and considerations.

1. Those who stand behind and provide the supply line are in no way inferior to the missionary spiritually or vocationally. We often stand on the side-line and applaud those who make such sacrifices and manifest such a consecration to go to the front line as missionaries. In doing so, we may suffer from a guilt complex that we are enjoying the good things of life while others are foregoing them for the sake of the Gospel. We may also feel a little inferior spiritually thinking we are not as consecrated as the missionary is. This is wrong! In consecration and sacrifice the supporter and the missionary should be the same, the difference is only in the call. The supporter should not evade the call and consider the missionary as his substitute.

Anytime he is called to go to the field, he should be willing to go. He must certainly face this possibility even as he supports the missionary. Otherwise his support is only a façade to hide his unwillingness to obey the Lord fully. But because his call is to stay back and do the job as the Lord has asked him to do, he must be involved in missions with the same consecration and sacrifice as the missionary.

2. The reward will be the same for those in the supply line at the back as for those in the front line. This biblical principle is expressed in Numbers 31:27 "Divide the spoils between the soldiers who took part in the battle and the rest of the community." David affirmed this in 1 Samuel 30:24, "The share of the man who stayed with the supplies is to be the same as that of him who went down to the battle. All shall share alike."
3. In this partnership money is not central. Personal concern and fellowship must be central. There must be a warm, sincere personal relationship between the supporter and the missionary as between two equals. The supporter is not the boss because he hands out the money. He is a mere steward of the Lord expressing his partnership with the missionary through his prayer support and financial support. This means the supporter must be in constant touch with the missionary through letters. Missionaries have often complained that the supporting groups never write to them though they write regularly to the group. The common excuse that is given is that the supporters have no time to write. This makes their support a mere exercise in terms of money, there is no partnership in it.
4. If personal concern is important in this partnership, it follows naturally that prayer is vital. In this ministry of prayer, the supporting group should include not only the missionary but also the people among whom he is working and the new born church and its leaders. Sometimes prayer is focused so exclusively on the missionary and his family and every little sickness or need they have that we forget that this is partnership in missions and therefore we have to think of the people among whom the missionary is working. The supporting group must become equally well-acquainted with the people among whom the missionary is working as they are with the

missionary by gathering all the information they can get and then pray for those people.

5. In this relationship between the supporting group and the missionary Christ must always be central and the purpose of this partnership should not be forgotten. It is for the sake of the Gospel. The danger is that the group may become so emotionally attached to the missionary and become so possessive that the purpose of the partnership is missed. The supporting group should not pamper the missionary forgetting the rules and policies of the mission to which he belongs. The partnership is really between the mission and the supporting group and the missionary is the representative of the mission.

III. The Missionary

Though the partnership in missions is between the mission and the supporting group, it is concretized in the missionary as he represents the mission. Let us look at the principles that must govern the missionary in this partnership.

1. The missionary must remember that he is an equal in this partnership. He must shed the donor or the recipient attitude. His part is not merely to receive but also to give. Just as he expects his supporting group to pray for him, he must also pray for them intelligently acquainting himself of their needs.
2. He should minister to his supporting group spiritually. It is a biblical principle that we share our spiritual blessings with those who share their material blessings with us (Romans 15:27). This can be done when the missionary visits his supporting group and spends quality time with them. The mission should make sure that their missionary spends enough time with his supporting group. There can also be a ministry through letters. Paul ministered to his partner churches through letters. I have often observed missionaries treating this as an unnecessary burden. They should not regard this as mere reporting. Some have said, "I have nothing to report, nothing is happening here. So why should I write? And, what can I write?" It is wrong to assume that they write only when spectacular things are happening. It is equally wrong on the part of the supporting group to expect their missionary to send always exciting and

spectacular reports. Through letters news is shared whether good or bad. Not only blessings and victories but also burdens and problems are shared. Encouragements and admonitions received from the Lord through His Word are shared. This will bring blessing to the supporting group as well.

Some missionaries stop writing to their supporting group because they do not get any letters from them. This is not the right attitude. Remember this is not an employer-employee relationship. This is a relationship of equality. So the communication must be out of love even if letters do not come regularly from the other side.

Letter-writing for a missionary is not an option. It is a part of his ministry!

3. The missionary should accept his supporting group as God's gift to him. How warmly Paul accepted his partner churches (Romans 1:8, 16:3-16, Philippians 1:7-8, 4:1)! He should not regard them as a burden imposed on him by his mission and should never take them for granted.
4. The missionary should remember that this relationship is for the purpose of Christ, for the sake of missions and should not take advantage of it for his personal benefit. Missionaries may be tempted to get all the benefits they can from such relationships for their families and for themselves forgetting their fellow missionaries who may not get such opportunities.

In any meaningful partnership the going may be rough and difficult but the blessings far outweigh these problems. With the help of the cleansing blood of Christ and the Holy Spirit such partnerships can be a reality.

58. Why Go Overseas?

Taken from Outreach, September 2007.

(For many, an overseas job is their ultimate goal in life. Nothing matters more to them than minting money and living it up. But when God calls His children to cross the borders of their motherland, it is for a higher calling. Our Founder General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Theodore Williams draws our attention to God's Global Mandate. He outlines the fact that it is God's prerogative to send His missionaries wherever He wants them to serve Him. Tracing IEM's experience in sending Indian missionaries overseas, Rev. Williams underlines the fruitfulness of partnerships with like minded missionary organizations overseas.)

A young lady received the Lord's call to go to another country as a missionary. Her mother and her church people opposed her. They said, "When there is so much need in our country, why should you go abroad? Why can't you be a missionary here among the unreached?" A very valid question! If there is no divine dimension such as God's call to an individual, we can reason out and accept the reasoning of these people. But we know from Scripture our Lord is the Lord of the Harvest and He is the Lord of the Church as well as the lord of our lives and He decides where we should go and where we should serve Him.

I. The Background

When we launched the IEM on January 15, 1965, our primary focus was on those who have never heard the Gospel in our country. I went on a mission trip to Sikkim in June, 1962 when it was a separate country and went to Nepal in April, 1965 on an invitation to speak in the newly formed congregation in Kathmandu. These trips laid a burden for the Himalayan countries on my heart. That was the background for our ministry in the Bhutan border.

Then, in June 1966 I went on a mission trip to Thailand with a missionary of the World Gospel Mission (linked with South India Bible Institute) to survey the needs of that country. Prior to that I was invited to the meeting for the formation of the International Afghan Mission (IAM) in Kabul in January 1966 with the thought of IEM becoming a partner in the IAM. However I could not get the visa but

made the trip finally in October 1966. These visits and what I had read about the challenge of Thailand and Afghanistan laid a burden for these countries on my heart. I was fully convinced that we cannot restrict our mission and concern to our country but should do all we can to reach the unreached in other countries also. Ours should be a global missionary concern.

Two other events also had a significant part in the development of IEM's involvement in other countries. We entered into a partnership agreement with the Overseas Missionary Fellowship (which evolved from the former China Inland Mission in 1965) to channel Indian missionaries to East Asia through them and with the Bible and Medical Missionary Fellowship (known as Interserve now) to channel Indian missionaries to West Asia through them. It was at that time that Dr. Theodore Srinivasagam contacted us about his missionary interest in Thailand. We recruited him in our IEM Board meeting in January, 1971 and channeled him to the OMF to serve in Thailand. We recruited Mr. T.M. John and channeled him to the BMMF to serve in the IAM in Afghanistan in 1972.

During my ministry in the Belgrave Heights Convention (a Keswick type of Convention) near Melbourne, I met the Director of the Asia Pacific Christian Mission and he told me about their work in Papua New Guinea and invited Indian missionaries to go there. He visited India and spoke about the challenge of PNG in some of our meetings. This led to our recruiting of Mr. and Mrs. Victor Sittler as missionaries to PNG in 1972. By this time, the Sudan Interior Mission serving in Africa became SIM International and expressed their desire to have our Indian missionaries to serve in partnership with them in Ethiopia.

II. Facing the Challenge

The great question was how to support these Indian missionaries. We cannot send money out of India to support missionaries. So we accepted the concern to challenge overseas Indian believers to get involved in reaching the unreached in India and also to support our Indian missionaries who have the call to serve abroad. Such support will be channeled to missions like the OMF, BMMF, APCM and SIM International with whom our missionaries are working. This was the

origin of IEM Overseas Associates and Friends of IEM in other countries. We knew that there is a risk involved in this. The danger is that those who go overseas to raise funds may raise funds for themselves and their families and their children's education because overseas supporters can be very generous.

To safeguard our indigenous nature and our commitment to have Indian believers and churches to support our missionaries in India, we decided that overseas funds will be used to support our missionaries overseas and within India it will be used only for capital expenditure to support projects and not to support individual missionaries.

III. Training Overseas Missionaries

These missionaries are trained in the programmes which the Missions with which they work have in their countries of service. They are also trained in our own training programme and in our Church Ministries before they leave India.

1. Drop outs?

What if these missionaries are not able to go back to their country of service due to visa problems or other difficulties? That has worked for our good as in the case of Dr. Theodore Srinivasagam whom we assigned to serve in our Field Ministries in India and later as the Field Secretary and then General Secretary. In the case of Mr. Victor Sittler we assigned him to serve in Administration and later as the Administrative Secretary and then General Secretary.

2. The Challenge

The contribution of our missionaries is also appreciated because of their influence and impact in the multi-national teams in which they worked. It was also a powerful witness for the Gospel in the countries where they worked as people see that the Christian Gospel transcends nationality, race and culture and the missionary venture is not just a British or American programme.

A challenge before us is to have missionaries from other nations, races and cultures working in the IEM in India along

with our missionaries. During my visits to the Solomon Islands and PNG I found a lot of interest in this among the young people and the churches in those countries. I understand that some candidates come to our OTI from the Solomon Islands. May the Lord continue to direct and prosper the IEM in this venture.

59. What Makes IEM Tick?

Taken from Outreach October 2007

A very relevant question! I am sure that you, our IEM Outreach readers and our supporters have often thought of it. As one who has been involved in IEM from its founding, let me share these facts with you. I have often mentioned this in our State Conventions and Area Secretaries' meetings. Our pillars are our Area Secretaries representing our supporters and then the components of the building are our valuable missionaries, the Lord Himself being our Cornerstone. The structure of the IEM developed as the ministry grew.

I. Structure

We did not form the structure first and then try to fit the ministry into it. It was the other way around. The IEM Society which is the General Body of the Mission is formed by nomination out of our Area Secretaries, supporters and friends. From the Society, the IEM Board is elected. According to our Constitution, the Society is the authoritative body and is represented by the Board as the Executive body to administer IEM matters. The Chairman of the Board is elected by the Board.

The first person to assist the General Secretary was the Promotional Assistant whom I later designated as the Promotional Secretary. Then, I designated the Finance Secretary, later the Administrative Secretary and then the Literature Secretary. That is how the structure evolved. This is described in the book *Sacrifice or Investment* written by my wife and published at IEM Silver Jubilee in 1990. In the beginning I met with these Secretaries every three months for consultation and later designated them as the Administrative Committee. This committee was purely a consultative body and had no executive function and is not recognized in the Constitution. The Secretaries do not function autocratically. They are shepherds and represent the interests and the vision of the missionaries. The Board is not a strange body as it consists of representatives from our Area Secretaries and supporters.

II. Selection of General Secretary

In the selection of the General Secretary the Board took the initiative as the Executive Body choosing suitable candidates out of those who had put in twenty years of missionary service in the IEM and had suitable spiritual and administrative qualities. This was done in consultation with other missionaries. That is how our present General Secretary, Rev. John Wesley was chosen. I refused to have any committee membership after my resignation in 1993 but agreed to be a Consultant at the invitation of the present Chairman and the Board.

Our present Chairman, Mr. Suresh Kumar has been a supporter and key member of the IEM in Andhra Pradesh for nearly 30 years. He has been an interpreter for the IEM conventions in AP. He is a man of God. The Lord has given us godly people to serve in our Board and they have acted with oneness and integrity in all that they have done.

When John Wesley and his wife Mercy joined the IEM, I was the General Secretary. Before the Board interview, I had a personal time with them and was very pleased with their commitment and testimony. Both have a godly heritage with parents whom the Lord has used to win souls. Wesley helped me in developing the Cassettes ministry in the IEM. A very vibrant youth programme known as the Happy Evening was introduced by him in the IEM.

I endorse our Board Chairman, the Board and our General Secretary and commend them to you our friends and supporters including our overseas supporters and Associates for your prayer and support.

60. Missionary Prayer Cells

Prayer is the essential ingredient of a Christian. Without prayer a Christian or church is dead. The Bible says "Not praying is also sin" (1 Sam.12:23). We have seminars for teaching the Bible and for teaching preaching techniques but only a few on prayer. Prayer is unfortunately given less importance in Christendom.

As any Ministry or Organization, IEM also stands basically on the support of prayer. Over the years this has been the strength of the mission. We praise God for those who stand behind us upholding us regularly in their prayers. We have individuals, families and churches supporting us through their prayers. Yet some still want to know how they can pray for missions and mobilize prayer support for missions. Here are A few steps for those who are willing to start a prayer cell.

1. How to organize a prayer cell? Bible Quorum is two or three. (Matt 18:19-20)

- a) Gather like-minded people from your surrounding area or neighborhood who are willing to join with you in prayer. Eg: families/ office colleagues/ house wives/ college students etc.,
- b) Select a house or a common place where everybody can meet for prayer conveniently.
- c) The Prayer cell could either be once or twice in a week or once in a month depending on the convenience of the group that is gathering. Frequent change of day and time will cause confusion. Never postpone a prayer cell.
- d) Inform the members well in advance. If possible remind them once on that day.
- e) Punctuality should be maintained. Be on time.
- f) Don't wait for late comers.
- g) Prepare prayer points in advance. Write requests on small cards or papers as per your convenience, for distribution during the prayer time.
- h) Housewives can also meet during the day either 11am to 12 pm or 3 pm to 4 pm according to their convenience.

2. How to divide the time? (Duration – One Hour)

Start the Prayer Cell with a couple of songs of praise and worship. Do not turn the prayer cell into a singing session or Bible study. Remember, many of them come for the prayer cell after a tiring day's work. Let it not be too lengthy for them.

10 or 15 minutes of short devotion can be taken by one of the members who are informed earlier. 15 minutes is used for sharing personal testimonies and experiences. 30 minutes is for IEM prayer points: during the prayer time prayer cards may be distributed or a video or slide presentation can be arranged or if a missionary is in town on that day, he may be asked to share about his ministry and prayer request. Be apt in praying for any request. Missionary prayer cell should mainly emphasize prayers for missionaries, and the work among the unreached people groups, persecutions, responses etc.

Don't pray for unnecessary things. Pray for only given requests. Avoid personal prayers and church prayer during IEM prayer cell.

“When we pray God does wonders in our mission fields” (Ex.17:10-11)

Let each person pray for one request only. Depending on the size of the Group and number of prayer points available, two or three requests can be prayed by one person.

What is an ideal Group in a prayer Cell?

There are Groups which have 20 or more in a prayer cell. The Ideal Group is 10-15. If it exceeds, start a new prayer cell. At the end, make an announcement of the next prayer cell's venue, date and time.

“Pray without ceasing” Phil.4:6-7

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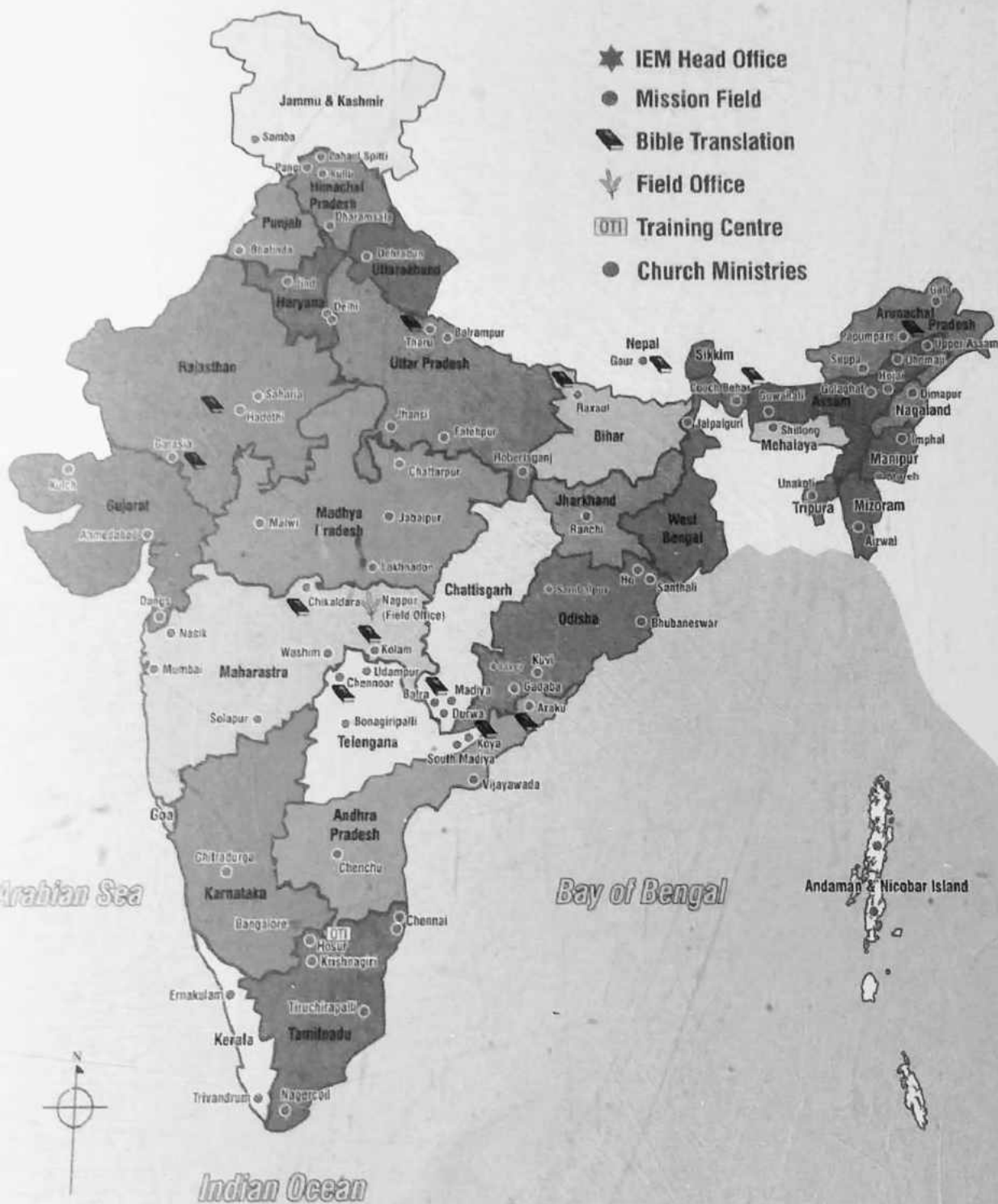
ITEM at a Glance

The Indian Evangelical Mission (IEM) was born on 15 January 1965. God used Rev Dr Theodore Williams to be its founder and the first General Secretary. IEM family looks back with gratitude to God as we celebrated the Golden Jubilee (1965-2015).

1. **Our Vision :** The Gospel to every person and Church among every people group.
2. **Our Mission :**
 1. To take the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the unevangelized areas in India and abroad and to plant churches among unreached people groups.
 2. To challenge and strengthen Indian Christians to realize their responsibility for world evangelization and to recognize their partnership with other Christians in the world in fulfilling their task.
3. **Our Pillars :** Vision, Faith & Sacrifice
4. **Our Core Values :** Mobility, Equality, Integrity, Amity, Loyalty, Purity & Simplicity
5. **Our Basics :** IEM is a Prayer Movement depending on God for its resources and guidance; Pioneering Movement in moving to the new areas for evangelization; People Movement by identifying, developing people and entrusting the ministries; and Partnership Movement in evangelizing the communities for transformation in partnership with the churches. It is an interdenominational and indigenous mission in its outlook and operation. It looks to God for all its concerns by faith.
6. **Our Up-date :** Kindly pray for our 900 Mission workers are serving in 28 States (provinces) among 116 different people groups, around 25 missionaries are recruited every year. We are involved in Evangelism, Church planting, Bible translation in 19 languages, Scripture Engagement in 34 languages, Literacy work, Tribal hostel and day care centers in 24 places, Medical ministry, socio economic community development work, leadership development and Short Term Bible schools, conducting workshop for families, Church leaders and the Christian workers in different churches. We publish our Outreach Magazine in 10 different languages. We motivate the Church congregations and youths to take part to extend God's Kingdom through prayer and partnership.



-  IEM Head Office
-  Mission Field
-  Bible Translation
-  Field Office
-  Training Centre
-  Church Ministries





Rev. Dr. Theodore Williams who hailed from Tamil Nadu in Southern India and whose life has been dedicated for the cause of missions, was the General Secretary of the Indian Evangelical Mission, General Secretary of the Indian Missions Association, the Secretary of Missions of the Evangelical Fellowship of India and the Executive Secretary of the Missions Commissions of the World Evangelical Fellowship as well as its President. He was instrumental in developing indigenous missions in India and beyond the boundaries.

This collection of articles by Rev. Dr. Theodore Williams will provide a feast of information for those who have a hunger and thirst to be involved in every aspect of Christian Missions. It is a journey into the world of Missions as reflected in the sacrificial life of Dr. Theodore Williams.